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AUTHOR	Jongeward, Ray
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ABSTRACT

The materials in this manual are designed to help workshop leaders prepare for and present a workshop for school board members on improving school board meeting practices for increased effectiveness. Based on successfully used procedures and recent research, the suggestions presented in the workshop are organized under seven headings: the agenda, the roles of the board and the district staff, leadership, decision-making, communication, time management, and the legal requirements of board meetings. The manual consists of six sections: an introduction; three sections on planning, presenting, and evaluating the workshop; a selection of resource materials; and a booklet for workshop participants. The discussion of planning contains information on the focus and scope of the workshop, familiarization with resource materials and equipment, workshop presentation techniques, and suitable grouping of participants. The presentation section includes sequential descriptions of workshop activities in each of the seven topic areas, leader focuses for each activity, and instructions for conducting the activities. The resource materials provided include papers on school board meetings, a discussion of recent research into board meeting effectiveness, and an article on resolving disagreements between board members. Masters from which transparencies for projection at the workshops can be reproduced are also included. (Author/PGD)

ED224119

Effective Meetings

Keys to School Boardsmanship

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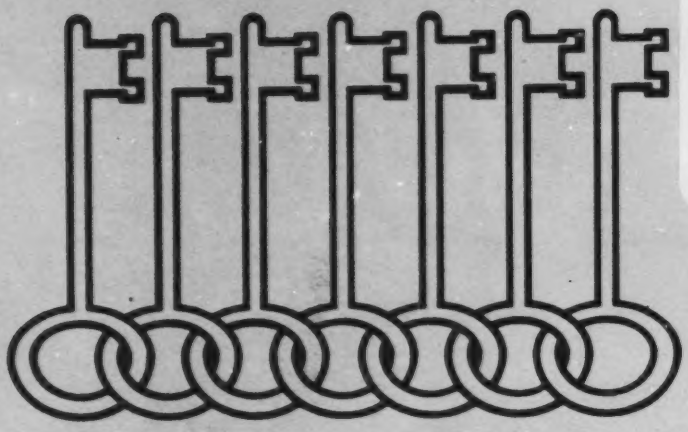

A Program of Continuing Education for School Board Members

EA 015 205

Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory
300 S.W. Sixth Avenue • Portland, Oregon 97204

These materials have been produced as part of "Keys to School Boardsmanship," a project to develop new materials in boardsmanship education for local school board members. It is a joint effort among:

- The Association of Alaska School Boards
- The Idaho School Boards Association
- The Montana School Boards Association
- The Oregon School Boards Association
- The Washington State School Directors' Association
- The National School Boards Association
- The Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory

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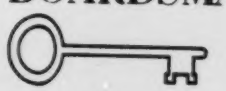
KEYS TO SCHOOL BOARDSMANSHIP



Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory

A Manual for Workshop Leaders

What's your public image?

EFFECTIVE SCHOOL BOARD MEETINGS

Developed by
Ray Jongeward, Ed.D.
Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory

KEYS TO SCHOOL BOARDSMANSHIP

Prologue:

This manual is one in a series of thirteen developed by the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory (NWREL) as part of the "Keys to School Boardsmanship" project.

The workshop programs resulting from the project are intended to help strengthen local school boards through continuing education.

The workshops in the series have been thoroughly tested by NWREL staff and by the staff of state school board associations in Alaska, Idaho, Montana, Oregon and Washington. These programs have been found to be extremely useful as tools for strengthening continuing education services to school board members.

The "Keys to School Boardsmanship" materials are now being published and distributed by the National School Boards Association (NSBA). In addition, the NSBA is developing a national center designed to assist state associations to make the best use of the material.

Thirteen manuals in the series now available from NSBA include:

- Board/Administrator Relations
- Building Bridges: School Board Political Roles
- Communicating with the Community
- Conflict: Alternatives to Blowing a Fuse
- Effective School Board Meetings
- The Educational Management Team
- Policy Development
- Policy is Power
- Program Evaluation: School Board Roles
- What Do School Boards Do?
- School Board Self-Assessment
- School Improvement: A Tune the School Board Can Play
- Teamwork: The Board and Superintendent in Action

SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

EFFECTIVE SCHOOL BOARD MEETINGS

The materials in this manual are designed to assist workshop leaders in preparing for and conducting the Effective School Board Meetings workshop.

Purpose and Rationale

The purpose of this workshop on Effective School Board Meetings is to help school board members improve their own board meeting practices by reviewing successful procedures and knowledge from recent research.

It is at a school board meeting where much of the public image of the board is created. Yet, few of us have given much thought to how they were conducted. This workshop attempts to help board members realize that the way in which board meetings are conducted is a subject open to their scrutiny. Board members need not continue to accept meeting procedures as unchangeable if they are not accomplishing the results expected. The materials in this workshop use successful practice and recent research to illustrate effective meeting procedures. With the use of improved practices board members should see board meetings as helping them accomplish the goals of the district as well as feel more satisfied with how their meetings are being conducted.

Scope and Coverage

Seven basic elements of effective school board meetings are covered in this workshop. They are organized into separate modules that may be used independently of one another or together in various combinations. The seven basic elements covered are:

1. Agenda
2. Board/Staff Roles
3. Leadership
4. Decision Making
5. Communication
6. Time Management
7. Legal Requirements

Approach of the Workshop

The configuration of the modules includes opportunity for information input, interaction with the materials, participants to share their own resources and reflection on their own meeting practices. The emphasis is on providing alternatives and options rather than "answers." The workshop materials recognize that there are many ways to conduct effective meetings. What may work well for one board may not be useful to another board. The bottom line for any board is: "Are the meeting procedures used effective in producing the results expected?"

SECTION 2: PLANNING THE WORKSHOP

EFFECTIVE SCHOOL BOARD MEETINGS

There are many issues and decisions that need to be considered when planning a workshop on Effective School Board Meetings. Included are:

- Scope and focus
- Reviewing workshop materials and procedures
- Physical arrangements
- Grouping of participants
- Preparation of materials
- Equipment needs

The information which follows is intended to assist you, as leader, to consider and make decisions about these issues in order to develop your workshop plan.

Scope and Focus

The materials in this manual on Effective School Board Meetings are composed of several parts. The chart on the following page illustrates them.

EFFECTIVE SCHOOL BOARD MEETINGS WORKSHOP

Workshop Unit	Time	Materials and Equipment Needed	Content
Introduction to Effective Meetings	15-20 min.	Meeting Effectiveness Scale Transparencies	Warm Up: Meeting Scale NSBA Survey Elements of Effective Mtgs.
Agenda	35-45 min.	Participant Booklet Transparencies	Fact Sheet and Quiz Exercise: Consent Agenda Idea Paper: Minutes Checklist Idea Paper: Visitors
Board/ Superintendent Roles	50-60 min.	Participant Booklet Transparencies	Fact Sheet and Quiz Exercise: Meeting Roles/ Responsibilities Roles Board Members Play Idea Paper
Effective Leadership	55-60 min.	Participant Booklet	Fact Sheet and Quiz Exercise: Leadership Styles Exercise: Chairman of Board
Decision Making	55-60 min.	Participant Booklet Transparencies	Fact Sheet and Quiz Exercise: Decision Making Exercise: Parliamentary Procedures Idea Paper: Consensus
Communication	50-60 min.	Participant Booklet	Fact Sheet and Quiz Exercise: Listening Exercise: Face to Face Skills
Time Management	55-60 min.	Participant Booklet	Fact Sheet and Quiz Idea Papers Exercise: How Board Spends its Time and Resources
Legal Aspects	25-30 min.	Participant Booklet	Outline of State Laws
Summary	10-15 min.	Summary Rating Form Evaluation Form	Summary Rating Sheet Evaluation

Total 350-410 min.

Referring to the chart, a few comments are appropriate:

- Individual modules vary in length from 20-50 minutes.
- Fact sheets and quizzes are included in all but one module.
- An overhead projector is the only piece of equipment required.
- Participant booklets are needed in all modules.

An important planning issue to be resolved is how many and which modules to use in the workshop period. Unless more than four hours of time is available, not all of the modules can be used; therefore, a selection among them is necessary. Regardless of how many modules are used, it is necessary to have appropriate opening and closing activities. In a two-hour workshop, for example, approximately 20-30 minutes may be needed for them. The remaining 90-100 minutes could be used by presenting (1) the Agenda, Board/Administrator Roles, and Leadership modules, or (2) Board/Administrator Roles, Decision Making and Time Management modules, or (3) the Leadership and Communication modules together. The decision of which modules to use hinges upon the length of time available and the nature of the audience to be served, their interests and needs. Of course, a full workshop day could be planned using all seven of the modules.

Reviewing Workshop Materials and Procedures

There are four background papers found in Section 5 of the Manual that will be very helpful in your planning for a workshop on Effective School Board Meetings. Included are:

- "About Meetings--A Concept Paper," by Ray E. Jongeward
- "A Review of Recent Research," based on the book, Professionals Versus the Public: Attitudes, Communication, and Response in School Districts, by Harvey J. Tucker and Harmon Zeigler, Longman Press, New York, 1980
- "The School Board Meeting is More Than a Meeting," a background paper by Ray E. Jongeward
- "Board Spats Getting You Down? Here's How to Resolve Them," by Carroll Johnson, Updating School Board Policies, Volume 13, Number 4, April 1982, National School Boards Association

These papers provide valuable background information that will aid your understanding of the procedures and materials found in the workshop.

The following outline illustrates the format used in Section 3: Presenting the Workshop.

TIME		MATERIALS
10 min.	Activity 2: Fact Sheet and Quiz Leader Focus: Explain to participants that this activity will raise important questions about an agenda, its use and importance. o Procedures	Participant Booklet Page 2

Note that the amount of time needed for each activity appears at the left, its name in the center and materials needed at the right. The purpose of the activity is shown under Leader Focus. The entire activity is found between the solid lines to help identify when an activity begins and ends. This format is used throughout Section 3.

The information found in this manual provides all directions and instructions for the materials used by participants and is keyed to the Participant Booklet. Other resources needed such as transparencies or films are also noted in the right margin following the name of the activity.

Finally, each booklet contains a tear-out workshop evaluation form as the final page. More information about this will be found in Section 4.

Physical Arrangements

As leader you should take responsibility for the physical arrangements of the workshop. This workshop requires a high level of individual small group and large group participation. It works best when five to eight participants are seated at round tables.

This arrangement gives the leader and participants flexibility in moving from one kind of activity to another. It also allows participants to become acquainted with others and to hear and to easily interact with them. As leader you can circulate freely among the tables answering questions and keeping the groups on task.

Since a projector and transparencies are used, there is also the need to arrange the tables so that viewing the screen/wall is facilitated.

Grouping Participants

Typically, two kinds of groupings of participants are possible in a workshop: "stranger" groups--those who do not know one another and "home" groups--people who know each other. This workshop will work well using either method. However, if several board members and administrators from the same district attend the workshop, the "home" grouping is preferred. The reason for this is that they are very familiar with the meeting situation at home, and the suggestions presented can be discussed without the need for long explanations. Also, in the event that specific changes are discussed and agreed upon, it will be easier to implement these ideas when they return home.

As leader, regardless of how participants are grouped, you will want to monitor group progress regularly to ensure maximum participation and productivity.

Materials and Equipment Readiness

It is important to have (1) a good supply of booklets for all participants, (2) checked the overhead projector/screen (spare bulb), and (3) arranged your own materials—transparencies, etc., so that you can follow them easily.

Opening and Closing the Workshop

As leaders we often are most concerned with the presentation part of the workshop. However, both the opening and closing parts of a workshop are also very important. The old "rule of thumb" process is a good one to remember:

Tell them what you plan to tell them.

Tell them.

Tell them what you told them.

A carefully planned opening will put participants at ease and begin to engage them on the workshop topic. An adequate closing summarizes the purposes of the workshop and the activities that were used to accomplish these purposes.

Evaluation

An effective workshop includes the opportunity to evaluate it. Feedback from participants concerning the workshop provides valuable help to the leader in making needed improvements or reassuring him/her that it was well presented and received. More details in Section 4.

SECTION 3: PRESENTING THE WORKSHOP

EFFECTIVE SCHOOL BOARD MEETINGS

TIME		MATERIALS
	Workshop Introduction	
Total Time: 15-20 min.	To the Leader: Materials found in this section are organized for flexible use. A standard introduction and closing activity is available for use with the seven modules. It is assumed that the leader will select which modules to use depending upon the amount of time available, the needs expressed and the audience. The introductory and closing materials are appropriate for whatever set of modules have been selected.	
5 min.	**Activity 1: Opening of Workshop**	
	Leader Focus: This routine but very important part of the workshop is intended to take care of all necessary details so that participants are ready to begin.	Name Tags, Registration, Refreshments, Materials, Etc.
	o Welcome participants, making short introductions of people as necessary. Announce local arrangements, e.g., refreshments, food, rest accommodations, etc.	
	o Announce workshop topic and approximate time schedule.	Workshop Agenda if available
	Activity 2: Warm-Up	
5 min.	Leader Focus: The purpose of this activity is inclusion of participants—to make them feel part of the group and to focus their attention on the workshop content. It is meant to be a transition from wherever they came to the "here and now," leaving all their other interests and concerns behind them. Since this workshop is highly interactive, it is intended to involve participants within the first few minutes.	

TIME		MATERIALS
	o Distribute the meeting effectiveness scale.	Meeting Effectiveness Scale
	o This meeting effectiveness scale uses criteria that are often associated with good board meetings. Ask them to remember their last school board meeting and then determine the rating they would assign to it. Put the number in the space provided.	
	o When they have finished ask them to add their scores.	
	o Announce the interpretation of their scores as follows:	

-- 60-70 Very Effective
-- 50-60 Good
-- 30-50 Average
-- 20-30 Below Average
-- 0 ?????

> Helpful Hint: Alternative warm-up activities include:
>
> 1. List three things that make you feel you have attended an effective school board meeting.
>
> 2. If you could be granted three wishes for improving your school board meetings, what would they be?

5 min. **Activity 3: A National Survey of School Board Meetings—National School Boards Association (NSBA)**

Leader Focus: Board members are interested in what other boards do. This activity provides a few statistics from a recent survey at an annual NSBA conference concerning local school board meetings. To make the information more interesting and to contrast it with local practices, use the following procedures:

TIME		MATERIALS
	o Show Transparency EM 1 exposing only one category at a time, e.g.,	Trans. EM 1
	LENGTH: 2 hours 3-4 hours 5 or more	
	Keep the national percentages covered until you can ask participants to raise their hands to determine how long their own board meetings last. When they have indicated the length of their <u>regular</u> meetings, uncover the results of the national survey for comparison purposes. It can be noted where the majority of local boards seem to fit in the national data.	
	o Repeat this procedure for: When Held, Frequency and Spectators.	
	o Summarize this brief activity by using Transparency EM 2.	Trans. EM 2

<u>Activity 4: Introduce Effective Meetings Topic</u>

5 min. <u>Leader Focus</u>: This activity provides participants with some reasons why spending time on this topic is important, shows the many elements available on the topic, and focuses on the specific ones selected for this workshop.

o Several points may be used to introduce the topic such as:

— Board meetings serve the public as "windows" to education. Some board windows are clean and bright, others may be smudged or even broken.

— Much of the community image of the school board is created at board meetings.

— School board members are seen as education leaders elected by voters to serve as their official link between them and the schools.

— Effective leadership helps people understand schools and tends to unite citizens in support of education.

TIME	MATERIALS

— Ineffective leadership often results in public apathy, misunderstanding, or dissension which damages schools.

— Effective school board meetings have several elements. (Use Transparency EM 3 to show them.) Trans. EM 3

— For this workshop we have selected:

_____

_____

_____

o We are now ready to proceed with the first one.

> Helpful Hint: If available time requires that introductory materials be reduced, Activity 3 could be eliminated and Activity 2 kept verbal instead of written, possibly using one of the alternative warm-ups.

TIME		MATERIALS

Total Time: 35-45 min.

Unit 1: The School Board Agenda

Background: The purpose of this material is to help participants understand that:

- The agenda is a vital ingredient to an effective meeting.
- A consent agenda can save valuable meeting time.
- Proper recording of minutes is an important action of the board.
- Ways are available to help visitors feel welcome at board meetings.
- They have information to share.

Activity 1: Introduce the Agenda as a Topic

Leader Focus: This activity shows participants why an agenda is a very important part of meetings. It suggests some ways to shorten them by combining routine items; to improve meeting minutes; and to help visitors feel welcome. The last activity helps focus on their own agenda practices.

5 min. Stress these points about the agenda as you introduce it:

- The agenda may be a legal requirement in the state.
- It is your "road map" for the meeting.
- Some boards insist on having a voice in the "direction" they travel and what happens upon reaching their "destination" (outcome).
- Agenda makers "control" what meetings can be—they have the "power." If your meetings don't cover what you want them to, then you must find ways to "influence" the agenda!

TIME		MATERIALS

- Explain the materials to be used in this section:
  - An agenda quiz
  - The use of a consent agenda
  - Handouts: Visitors' Agenda and meeting minutes
  - School Board Agenda Practices checklist
  - Rating My School Board Meeting Practices

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10 min. **Activity 2: Fact Sheet and Quiz**

Participant Booklet Page 2

Leader Focus: Explain to participants that this activity will raise important questions about an agenda, its use and importance.

- Turn to page 2 in the participant booklet. Ask them to read and complete the quiz, compare responses and discuss differences. The leader may wish to share information shown below. Responses from participants can be expected to vary. These were the responses most often given during the testing period:

  1. True--The agenda reflects to the public what the Board/Superintendent believes is the important business of the school district.
  2. True--Alerts everyone to amount of business to be transacted, when items may be expected and approximately how long the meeting may last.
  3. True--Especially helpful in "due process" court cases.
  4. True--Time on agenda is usually allocated for hearing from individuals or special interest groups.
  5. True--When followed provides for orderly procedures and helps the chairman move the meeting along.
  6. True--If made available in advance...two or three days.

TIME	MATERIALS

7. False--Small districts have needs similar to others, e.g., communication, decision making, legal records.

8. False--It is a valuable communication tool if used with media, citizens who attend, etc.

9. False--All board members often through the chairman contribute agenda items. The superintendent is usually the person responsible for assembling these items into an agenda.

10. False--Some flexibility is needed in order to adapt to unexpected circumstances and to keep meetings from being too sterile--businesslike yet warm and friendly!

- o Tell the participants that the Fact Sheet contains more details on many of these quiz items and other information about the agenda.

10-15 min.

Activity 3: Consent Agenda*

Leader Focus: Introduce the consent agenda as a new way that saves valuable meeting time for more important agenda items. Several school boards have found it a useful technique. Explain and discuss advantages as follows:

- o Expedites business by combining routines into one item — Trans. EM 4
- o Allows more meeting time to be devoted to those issues which are deemed most important
- o Saves time in recording actions in minutes since there is but one motion, second, etc.
- o Is flexible by allowing additional items to be added or any item to be deleted for later discussion on the agenda

*Based on materials prepared by Betty Mage, licensed parliamentarian, Vancouver, Washington.

TIME | MATERIALS

- Only one agenda item is needed entitled Consent Agenda, and a listing of included items following this title.

- Turn to page 4 of the participant booklet for practice. Ask participants to read and follow the directions. — Participant Booklet Page 4

- When most people are finished ask them to raise their hands for each item they believe fits into a consent agenda. Discuss different opinions by examining reasons for or against including particular items. Opinions will vary!

> Helpful Hint: Ask if anyone present uses a consent agenda. If so, have them tell about it—what items, how placed on agenda, etc.

- Cover the following points in summarizing this activity:

  — The placement of the consent agenda in the order of business is determined by the board in cooperation with the superintendent.

  — If a consent agenda is used, the chair in presenting the agenda would ask if any member of the board wishes to discuss or remove any item from it. If so, the item would be taken from the consent agenda and be appropriately placed on the regular agenda or removed from the agenda entirely, depending upon the request of the board member and the board's agreement.

  — The consent agenda and supportive materials would be appended to the regular agenda.

  — The basic purpose of a consent agenda is a more efficient use of time. It should be recognized that the use of a consent agenda will still require staff time. It is also understood that the administration recommends approval on all consent items.

TIME		MATERIALS
	— If the consent agenda is used, the items on that agenda are approved by a single motion stated as follows: "I move to approve the items listed on the consent agenda." The chair would take the vote on the single motion. The minutes of the school board meeting would include the approved motion as stated and list all of the items which appeared on the consent agenda.	
5-10 min.	Activity 4: School Board Meeting Minutes	
	Leader Focus: The purpose of the activity on minutes of meetings is to help board members realize the growing importance of keeping good meeting minutes and the care necessary in preparing them. The material explains that accurate records of actions taken by the board have always been important. However, they have a growing importance as legal records in the increasing number of court cases and grievances that we have today.	
	o Ask participants to turn to page 5 of their booklet and take a few minutes to read the information found there.	Participant Booklet Pages 5-7
	o Use Transparency EM 5 to highlight what minutes should show.	Trans. EM 5
	o After a few minutes discuss or reply to questions about the material.	
	Helpful Hint: Some districts have found a different agenda format to be a way of saving clerical time at meetings and also improving their accuracy. They use a format that looks like the outline shown in Transparency EM 6.	Trans. EM 6

TIME		MATERIALS
5-10 min.	Activity 5: Visitors' Agenda	
	Leader Focus: The visitors' agenda is for the purpose of illustrating one way to welcome visitors. Attendance at board meetings by citizens is unfortunately too infrequent. When they do appear it is important to help them feel welcome and understand when and how they can participate in the meeting. There are many different ways this can be done. Here is one way.	
	o Explain that an examination of effective school boards shows that they usually have well spelled out and easily understood policies and procedures for citizen input into their meetings.	
	o Turn to page 8 of the booklet to see an illustration of one way to assure visitors at board meetings feel welcomed.	Participant Booklet Page 8
	o Ask participants to please review this illustration and feel free to ask questions and/or share how they do it in their communities.	
10 min.	Activity 6 School Board Agenda Practices-- A Ten Item Checklist*	
	Leader Focus: The next activity serves as a checklist of agenda practices. There are 10 items that ask about agenda practices before and during the board meeting.	
	o Ask participants to please turn to page 9 of the booklet for a check on their own agenda procedures.	Participant Booklet Page 9
	o Check the appropriate columns on the right to indicate: G = good, A = adequate, NI = needs improvement.	

*Adapted from Memo to School Board Members. Pittsburgh: March 1976.

TIME		MATERIALS
	o Ask each board member to complete the checklist and tally the responses. At each table discuss items where there is the greatest difference of opinion.	
5 min.	Activity 7: Summary--Rating My School Board Meeting Practices	
	Leader Focus: In this module we have discussed several agenda practices. The quiz just completed may have furnished some new ideas. The purpose of this module was to show a variety of ways an agenda is prepared and used, and how it becomes an important public document through adequate recording of meeting minutes.	
	o Ask participants to turn to page 10 and to rate their own school board agenda practices and record any ideas they may have for changing or improving them.	Participant Booklet Page 10
	Helpful Hint: Groups usually contain rich resources of information, practices and experiences. It is important to capitalize on them whenever possible. Caution: Keep each contribution on the subject brief!	

UNIT 2: BOARD/SUPERINTENDENT ROLES AT MEETINGS

TIME		MATERIALS
Total Time: 50-60 min.	Background: Materials and exercises in this section try to clarify roles and relationships between the board and superintendent at board meetings. They include a quiz to stimulate thinking and discussion; an exercise on responsibilities before, during and after meetings; a listing of behaviors that help and harm relationships; a tongue-in-cheek explanation of how to sabotage school board meetings; and an opportunity for participants to rate their own role relationships at board meetings.	
5 min.	Activity 1: Introduce Topic	

Leader Focus: It is at school board meetings where much of the public image of a board is formed. One crucial area that helps or hinders this image is the clarity of role relationship between the board and superintendent. This module emphasizes the need for clear understandings by both parties as to who will do what and under what circumstances. Several points can be made to help introduce this topic:

- Roles of boards and superintendents at meetings vary from district to district and meeting to meeting.
- It is your choice how your board runs its meetings but you need to discuss and agree on it.
- When roles are left unclear confusion and sometimes resentment between board members and superintendents results.
- A board's public image can be enhanced if clear roles are determined for the board and superintendent.

TIME		MATERIALS

10 min. **Activity 2: Fact Sheet and Quiz**

Leader Focus: This activity focuses participants' attention on the unit content. It is a type of warm-up in which interaction begins immediately in an informal manner.

- Ask participants to turn to page 11 of their booklet and complete the quiz at the top of the page. — Participant Booklet Page 11
- When they have completed the quiz ask them to compare their answers with others at their table. Do they agree on all of their answers? If not, which ones caused disagreement and why?
- Allow a short time for these discussions and then close the activity by responding to specific questions, if any, that seem to trouble the whole group.
- As leader you may wish to share your own ideas of the answers to these questions. We realize that the English language is not always precise. As a result, the same words often mean different things to different people. This exercise enables you as leader to bring out this point very easily when discussing differing perceptions of the question by the members.
- Responses to the quiz questions most often cover these points:

  1. True. But also includes communication with staff and community, establishing the school program, and general management-oversight of the district.
  2. True. Student rights are being increasingly recognized. Teachers are citizens, too!
  3. True. Often expected to "walk on water"! And more too!
  4. True. A rich resource often not utilized.
  5. True. As elected officials, board members have two-way communication responsibilities: from the community to the school staff and from the school staff back to the community.

TIME		MATERIALS

6. True. Special hearings may be called to gather information on specific issues. A board meeting is a meeting-in-public, not a public meeting!

7. True. Part of the local bylaws are written for this purpose and should be made known to the public.

8. False. The superintendent is not a board member and as such cannot (not legal in many states) perform the role of chairman.

15-20 min.

Activity 3: Meeting Roles and Responsibilities--A Checklist Exercise

Leader Focus: This activity identifies many details associated with board meetings. Its purpose is to demonstrate that there are many facets of an effective meeting and to show that many people share responsibility for making it work properly. It may be noted that local practices and procedures vary from district to district. This listing is not an official document and may not contain all the effective procedures good boards use. Also, the person who carries a specific responsibility may vary. The important thing is that it is clear who is expected to do what. That can only happen if the board and superintendent have discussed and agreed on who should do it.

- Ask participants to turn to page 14 of their booklet and find a listing of specific board meeting responsibilities before, during and after a meeting. — Participant Booklet Page 14

- Ask them to read each item and designate with an R (has responsibility) or A (may assist) which person(s) and/or group(s) has responsibility for the task. Note that it is possible to have more than one R and/or A for each item.

- Have participants work individually on this task and then ask them to share their responses with others on their board and/or at their table.

TIME		MATERIALS

- When they have finished sharing (or stop them after a few minutes) use points such as the following to close this activity:
  - -- Did you have difficulty deciding who had responsibility for certain items? Which ones? Why?
  - -- Did you find that some columns were regularly checked? Which ones? Why?
  - -- Were some items a surprise to you? If so, which ones?
  - -- Are items omitted that should be on the list? If so, what are they?
- If some ideas were discussed that could improve your own board meeting practices you may wish to note them.

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10 min. **Activity 4: Roles School Board Members Play**

Leader Focus: This activity cites social and behavioral research findings concerning roles people play. Some of these behaviors help boards achieve their tasks, some help members work together and others destroy board effectiveness.

- Use the three transparencies to present this information in a brief lecturette.
- Following is a brief introduction and a more detailed explanation of these roles for use with the transparencies.
  - -- BEHAVIORS THAT HELP BOARDS ACHIEVE TASKS: Trans. EM 7

    Initiator: Proposing tasks or goals; defining a board problem; suggesting a procedure or ideas for solving a problem

    Information Seeker: Requesting facts; seeking relevant information about a board concern; asking for suggestions or ideas

TIME		MATERIALS

Information Giver: Offering facts; providing relevant information about group concerns; stating a belief, making suggestions or giving ideas

Clarifier: Interpreting or reflecting on ideas and suggestions; indicating alternatives and issues before the board; giving examples

Summarizer: Pulling together related ideas; restating suggestions after the board has discussed them; offering a decision or conclusion for the board to accept or reject

Consensus Tester: Sending up "trial balloons" to see if group is nearing a conclusion; checking with board to see how much agreement has been reached

— BEHAVIORS THAT HELP BOARD MEMBERS WORK TOGETHER: Trans. EM 8

Encourager: Being friendly, warm and responsive to others and their contributions; regarding others by giving them an opportunity for recognition

Sensor: Sensing feelings, moods, relationships within the board; sharing his/her own feelings or affect with other members

Harmonizer: Attempting to reconcile disagreements; reducing tension through "pouring oil on troubled waters"; getting people to explore their differences

Compromiser: When one's own idea or status is involved in a conflict, offering to compromise that position; admitting error, disciplining oneself to maintain board as a unit

Gatekeeper: Attempting to keep communication channels open; facilitating the participation of others; suggesting procedures for sharing opportunity to discuss board problems

TIME		MATERIALS

Standard Setter: Expressing standards for board to achieve; applying standards in evaluating board functioning and production

-- BEHAVIORS THAT DESTROY BOARD EFFECTIVENESS: Trans. EM 9

Attacker: Attacking board or problem being worked on; showing envy toward another's contribution by taking the credit for it

Dependent Person: Endeavoring to identify oneself with a strong individual or group (I'm with you.)

Bully: Trying to assert superiority on certain members of the group; may take the form of flattery, status assertion, direction giving, or interrupting others

Blocker: Resisting stubbornly; attempting to maintain or bring back an issue after the board has rejected it or gone beyond it

Playboy/girl: Displays lack of involvement in the board's processes--shown by cynicism, nonchalance, horseplay, etc.

Recognition Seeker: The person who knows everyone and is very willing to let you know about it

Procrastinator: Avoids issues by tabling motions, or abstains from voting

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5 min. Activity 5: How to Sabotage Board Meetings

Leader Focus: The previous activities have been a bit heavy on information that may tend to frighten a few participants. This activity is intended to be very brief and light-hearted, giving participants a chance to relax a bit with this humorous material.

TIME		MATERIALS
	o Ask participants to turn to page 17 of their booklet for a bit of relaxation.	Participant Booklet Page 17
	o Suggest that they browse through the page quickly. Explain that while some of these actions may be recognized that likely none can be found on their present board!! (Ha! Ha!)	
5 min.	Activity 6: Rating My School Board Meeting Practices	
	Leader Focus: This is the last activity of this unit. The purpose of it is to (1) help participants think about their own board meeting practices by rating them, and (2) record any ideas or thoughts that might have been stimulated during these activities.	
	o Ask participants to turn to page 18 of their booklet and follow the directions for the rating and for recording ideas or thoughts for meeting improvements.	Participant Booklet Page 18
	o Explain that this activity is for their own use and not to be turned in to the leader. They may keep them and use them with their own board members and superintendent.	
	Helpful Hint: If board members from the same board are present and if time is available, allow them to share their ideas for a few minutes.	

UNIT 3: LEADERSHIP AT SCHOOL BOARD MEETINGS

Total Time: 55-60 min.

Background: The reference papers found in Section 5 discuss in much greater detail the traditional and emerging concepts of leadership. Leadership as a function of a group is a recent concept that sees every member sharing responsibility for keeping the group alive and well. How something is done is often as important as what is done. This module attempts to make board members more aware of this idea and what it means in school board meetings.

TIME		MATERIALS

5-10 min.

Activity 1: Introduce Topic

Leader Focus: This module looks at leadership more as a function and a process rather than a role. It views leadership as a shared function where three goals are present: (1) accomplishment of the task, (2) resolution of internal group problems, and (3) the ability of members to work together effectively as a group. Teamwork is an important result of group efforts. The short time available to address this complex topic requires that the information be kept at the awareness level. Two prominent features of the module are a brief examination of types of leadership in a district and the leadership of the chairman of the board. Points that may be covered to introduce the topic of leadership include the following.

- There are at least two ways of looking at leadership:
  - As a role
  - As a function
- Leadership as a role:
  - Sees only one person performing in the role
  - Has sole responsibility vested in one person
  - Conforms leadership behavior to this picture of what a leader is

TIME		MATERIALS

- Leadership as a function:
  - Each member shares responsibility for keeping the group alive and well.
  - Leadership functions may be performed by any member of a group--even being the leader.
  - Leadership is learned--eliminates the need for "godlike" people to be leaders.
  - Purpose of the "designated leader" is to enable shared leadership to happen.
  - Leadership doesn't just happen--it is a conscious commitment to perform such functions in a group.
- Leadership is seen as group-centered where all members of a group are concerned with getting the task completed while internal conflicts are resolved and members work together effectively. It is a process where there is active listening occurring, where member behavior is important and trust is shown without fear of reprisal, where feelings and emotions are seen as legitimate factors and where the morale of the whole group is of concern for its productivity.

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10 min. **Activity 2: Fact Sheet and Quiz**

Leader Focus: The purpose of the Fact Sheet and Quiz is to focus on leadership as expressed at board meetings and to quickly involve participants in the topic.

- Ask participants to turn to page 19 of their booklet and complete the seven true and false questions. — Participant Booklet Page 19
- When they have completed the quiz ask them to share their "answers" with others at their table to see if differing perceptions exist. Ask them to find out why these differences are present.

- Find out from the groups if certain questions caused different opinions to exist at their table. If so, which ones? Use the content of the Fact Sheet to provide additional information on these specifics.

- Conclude this activity by explaining that the basic purpose of the Fact Sheet was to facilitate interaction rather than to "find the answers." However, the most frequent responses to the quiz questions are as follows and may be used as necessary with the participants:

  1. False. All board members share this responsibility.

  2. False. While a chairman is often more prominent than other board members, selection based on needed skills is vital for an effective board.

  3. False. It is against the law, too!

  4. False. Attitudes of board members toward their work and each other are equally or even more important.

  5. False. Locally developed and approved bylaws or procedures outline these procedures and have the effect of law.

  6. False. Under Robert's Rules Revised, the chairman no longer must refrain from making, discussing or voting on motions.

  7. True. A leadership team usually composed of administrative staff, principals and board now often form a management team. (A practice used informally for years in small school districts.)

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20 min. Activity 3: Types of School District Leadership

Leader Focus: Several ways of viewing leadership are available. The one used here is a common description often used to describe these varying styles. The purpose of this activity is to help

participants look broadly at the type of leadership they and their district personnel are providing the community. It may be the first time some members have looked at this image of themselves. Time allows only a cursory glance. Other workshops address this aspect in more detail should it become desirable (Teamwork, Management Team).

- Points that may be used to introduce types of leadership include:
  - Several different ways of looking at types of leadership are available.
  - The one used here is a fairly common one.
  - Often the type of leadership that exists is composed of parts of two or more types.
  - Emphasis here is on the superintendent's style of leadership, remembering that the superintendent obtains his/her jurisdiction from the board.
  - Compatibility is needed between what type of leadership the board expects and what type the superintendent provides.
  - Important discussions between the board and superintendent need to exist (preferably at time of employment) on the type of leadership desired by the board.
  - Much of the public image of the board hinges on what agreements between itself and the superintendent have been made concerning the type of leadership it expects to provide the community.
- Ask participants to turn to page 22 of their booklet and read the five models of leadership shown. — Participant Booklet Page 22
- Next, ask them to think about which model most nearly portrays the type of leadership in their district and mark (X) at the appropriate place on the line below (marked NOW).

TIME		MATERIALS

- Now, think about how you would like the type of leadership to be in your district: OK as it is? More shared? Less shared? Put a mark on the second line according to your wish (marked: LIKE IT TO BE).

- Suggest that members of the same board share their responses to see the extent of their agreement.

- Conclude this activity by using such questions with the group as:

  — Are there issues or situations when different leadership styles are appropriate? If so, when? (e.g., crisis, community disaster)

  — How do you as a board know when another type of leadership is needed? How about the superintendent?

  — Do some communities have definite leadership expectations? What kind are they? (e.g., involve the community in major decisions, strong administrator, etc.)

- Finally, point out that effective boards/ administrators use a variety of leadership styles at different points and times under varying sets of circumstances. The important thing is that both the board and superintendent recognize these variations while they attempt to maintain an agreed-upon type of leadership for the district.

20-25 min.

Activity 4: What Does it Take to be Chairman of Your Board?

Leader Focus: Highly visible to the public is the chairman of the school board. The behavior of the chairman at meetings and elsewhere is often the subject of media reporting. The purpose of this activity is to focus attention on what it takes to be an effective chairman of the board.

TIME		MATERIALS
	o Use such points as the following to open this activity: — The behavior of the board chairman at meetings and in the community does much to determine how the community views the school board. — Sometimes little or no thought by members of a board is given to the qualities needed for an effective chairman, e.g., "It's your turn," "Time to rotate chairman," etc. — Only recently have training opportunities become more available to assist chairmen with their job. — The next activity provides a wide variety of situations and raises questions concerning appropriate behaviors for the chairman. Some involve meeting behavior; some ethics; a few are humorous.	
20 min.	o Ask participants to turn to page 23 of their booklet and please read each question. Choose which multiple choice answer you think is best and circle its letter (a, b, c, d). Do this for all 17 questions. o When most participants have finished, ask them to name specific questions for which they were uncertain about the response. See what others thought an appropriate response was before suggesting which one you as the leader think it might be. (Remember, laws and local policies vary state to state and district to district, thereby altering the responses of the participants.) o Proposed responses to the questions are: 1. D Providing leadership in everything--and it may or may not include doing all things that were listed. 2. B Effective boards are clear about the role of the chairman. 3. D Plus several more you probably could mention.	Participant Booklet Page 23

4. C Without established policy you invite problems.

5. B The worst time to establish policy is during a crisis!

6. D Like all citizens, you ought to know what's happening in your schools, but don't use the occasion to throw your weight around.

7. C And only "C."

8. C At certain times the board may wish to change its rules on this one. Remember to keep them fair and that the schools belong to the public, not to the board or administrative staff. The public should be informed at the beginning of the meeting as to the rules for its participation.

9. D Any other way seriously undermines the position of the superintendent and risks creating distrust among others on the board.

10. D If you can swing it. Remember if it backfires, blame yourself!

11. A Disagreements about the chairman's role need to clarified when they occur to prevent possible embarrassment.

12. B What matters is that a consistent and fair procedure for evaluation has been agreed upon and followed. Anyone can do it.

13. C Believe it or not, it's true.

14. C What is sanctioned in one state is forbidden in others. Check the laws in your state.

15. A Of course you did the right thing. Who wouldn't demand immediate repair of a tile that just caused a sprained ankle?

TIME			MATERIALS
	16. A	If "D" is necessary, your district is in more trouble than you might think.	
	17. A	This is an unquestionable right of a school board chairman.	
	o	Conclude the activity by summarizing the purpose of the exercise: To focus attention of all board members on what it takes to be the chairman of your board. Ask if ideas or insights were gained from the exercise.	
	o	Summarize the unit on leadership by these points:	
		— The Fact Sheet and Quiz helped center attention on the different roles the board and superintendent have in educational leadership. It also viewed leadership as a shared function and not exclusively an individual role.	
		— Five types of leadership were described in the next activity and each person had an opportunity to decide which type was most similar to his/her own district operation. Also, participants had a chance to indicate what changes they would make.	
		— The final activity consisted of reviewing what it takes to be chairman of the board.	
2-3 min.	o	Now, turn to page 27 in your booklet. Rate leadership at your board meetings and note any ideas or suggestions you may have gotten for improving them.	Participant Booklet Page 27

UNIT 4: DECISION MAKING

Total Time: 55-60 min.

Background: Few boards spend their meeting time on how they make decisions. It is the purpose of this module to make board members more aware of the processes of decision making. The Fact Sheet discusses decision making types and styles, their advantages and disadvantages, and ways to improve decision making. A short exercise is used to examine a process for making decisions. Next, a 10-item quiz on parliamentary procedures brings out changes that could help boards facilitate their decision-making procedures. Finally, information is provided to explain the often misunderstood decision by consensus and procedures for using it.

TIME		MATERIALS
5 min.	Activity 1: Introduce Topic	

Leader Focus: This activity is intended to help board members realize the importance of examining their own board decision-making processes to determine if they can be improved. Points that may be used to introduce the topic include:

- Boards seldom are concerned with "how to decide"—they just do it!
- Separating problem solving from decision making is helpful—they are different--and will be examined in this module.
- The way a board makes a decision can cause hard feelings and resentment among its members--information is presented that may help prevent this from happening in your board.
- Parliamentary procedures (Robert's Rules) are changing and these changes will be noted.
- Decision-making processes are closely allied to the styles of leadership you have in your district (e.g., one person or team oriented).

TIME		MATERIALS

Activity 2: Fact Sheet and Quiz

10 min.

Leader Focus: The purpose of this activity is to engage participants quickly in the content of this unit through a short quiz. The focus is on types, styles and procedures for decision making.

- Ask participants to turn to page 28 of their booklet and complete the True/False quiz. — Participant Booklet Page 28
- Allow participants a few minutes to complete the items and then ask them to share and discuss their answers with others at their table.
- Ask if questons arose because of different opinions. Which ones were these? Why?
- Highlight some of the content of the Fact Sheet to provide additional detail to these questions and to draw attention to the content of the Fact Sheet.
- While the basic purpose of this activity is to get interaction between members stimulated, the proposed "answers" to the quiz may be used if they contribute as follows:

1. True. Unfortunately, reports on negative behaviors travel faster than positive actions.
2. False. It depends upon the nature of the problem. If values are involved or lack of solidarity might hamper the implementation of the solution, consensus may be preferable.
3. True. Problem solving is an excellent foundation upon which to base decision making.
4. True. It does require more time to use.
5. True. It does mean that the board may not always have all the information desired.
6. True. A board will need to become skilled in using more than majority vote procedures.

TIME		MATERIALS

7. False. Respectful give-and-take keeps the communication open between board members and usually improves decisions.

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10 min. **Activity 3: A Process for Decision Making**

Leader Focus: Following a problem solving process usually improves decisions. This brief exercise points out a step-by-step procedure which, if used before a decision is called for, will greatly improve the decisions made.

- o Explain that effective school boards often follow a process for decision making. They usually find that by doing so better decisions result, meeting time is saved, and there is improved communication among board members and staff.

- o Have participants turn to page 31 of their booklet where the steps of a recommended decision making process are listed. There are eight of them, but they are NOT in the proper order! Their job is to read them over and decide what the proper order should be. Tell them to place a "1" beside the first step until an "8" is reached for the last step. — Participant Booklet Page 31

- o When participants have finished, use Transparency EM 10 to show the proper order of these steps. — Trans. EM 10

- o Conclude this activity with questions such as:

  -- If these steps were used what might the next procedure be? (e.g., what type of decision procedure is best for this issue? Majority vote, consensus, etc., and why?)

  -- If the process is used, who does the research? (superintendent and staff-- perhaps with board/community assistance depending upon the issue)

TIME		MATERIALS
20-30 min.	**Activity 4: Parliamentary Procedure Quiz**	
	Leader Focus: Boards frequently cite Robert's Rules of Order as their parliamentary authority and do not realize that revised rules have been made to facilitate meetings of small groups. This activity covers a few of these changes. (It may be helpful to obtain a copy of Robert's Rules Revised for reference and review in order to be better prepared for questions and discussions that should be anticipated.)	
	o Make these introductory points:	
	— Orderly and businesslike meetings usually follow procedures such as set forth in Robert's Rules of Order.	
	-- Such procedures can be very helpful, though at times prove to be cumbersome and unnecessarily impede meeting progress.	
	— Some revised procedures by Robert's have attempted to streamline meetings of small groups. Some of these will be covered in the next activity.	
	o Ask participants to turn to page 32 of their booklet and read each of the 10 questions and answer them.	Participant Booklet Page 32
	o When participants have finished the quiz ask them to share their answers with someone at their table to see if they agree.	
	o After a few minutes show Transparency EM 11 to provide the answers.	Trans. EM 11
	o Discuss as needed using the following information to assist in responding:	
	1. False. Local policies or bylaws often answer this question. However, if the chairman does not vote, constituents represented by that person could feel disenfranchised since a vote was <u>not</u> cast for them.	

2. False, under Robert's Rules Revised. It is up to the chairman to decide whether a motion is recognized without a second. The chair has the option to accept a motion without a second or to let it die. If the chair accepts it the motion continues as though it had been seconded. The chair would say, "You've heard the motion. Is there discussion...etc."

3. True. The motion remains dead unless there is a motion to reconsider the issue and a new motion is made. It could be exactly the same as the previous motion!

4. False. It doesn't kill the motion because a motion can be made to take the motion from the table thereby reactivating it.

5. False. The importance of the issue does not automatically change the rules. Robert's Rules provides guidelines for such situations and many local boards have anticipated this problem by spelling out precisely how discussions and debates are to be handled in their bylaws or policies.

6. False. While it is not required, out of courtesy it is desirable for the chairman to explain <u>why</u> the action is out of order and <u>when</u> such action would be in order.

7. False. Under Robert's Rules this is <u>not</u> necessary. Discretion on the part of the chairman, however, must be exercised to not abuse this privilege. As facilitator of discussions the chairman must involve all members in a <u>balanced</u> discussion.

8. True. It should be for a good and sufficient reason, i.e., need more information, etc., not to procrastinate or avoid decision making.

9. False. Unanimous means 100 percent for the issue. Consensus means it may not be first choice but you can live with the decision <u>and that you will not sabotage it afterward</u>.

TIME		MATERIALS
	10. True What is to happen to the remaining agenda items should be a consideration when adjournment is a potential. What is to be gained?	
	o Close this activity by referring participants to the Quick Reference and Guide to Parliamentary Procedures found on page 33 of their booklet.	Participant Booklet Page 33

> Helpful Hint: Parliamentary procedure discussions can always be depended upon to generate much discussion and controversy. It is wise for the leader to be prepared to deal with the many questions and opinions that will be coming from the board. Everyone seems to have a "little" knowledge of the subject that qualifies him/her as an expert. Remember that this is not a short course on parliamentary procedures but an attempt to help participants see them as one of several ways decisions are made.

10 min. **Activity 5: What Consensus Means and How to Use it**

Leader Focus: Consensus is frequently misunderstood as being the same as unanimous. It is not! The purpose of this activity is to clarify as clearly as possible what consensus is, why it is useful and what techniques are needed to use it effectively.

o	Ask participants to turn to their booklet and read the material presented on pages 34 to 36. Explain that there will be time for questions and discussion when they have finished reading.	Participant Booklet Page 34
o	Allow time for brief discussion and questions.	

TIME		MATERIALS
	o Close this section with such questions as: — What types of board questions/issues lend themselves to consensus voting? (Highly controversial, emotional topics and other places where it is crucial that a thorough airing occur and that hard feelings because of win-lose should be avoided.) -- Ask if persons present have had <u>successful</u> experiences using consensus. Share them briefly.	
5 min.	o Summarize this section by reviewing the purpose, i.e., to help board members realize the importance of examining their own board decision-making processes to see if improvements might be made.	
	o Ask participants to turn to page 37 of their booklet and rate their own board decision making. Conclude by writing in the space provided any insights, ideas or thoughts that might improve their board meetings.	Participant Booklet Page 37

UNIT 5: COMMUNICATION

TIME		MATERIALS
Total Time: 50-60 min.	Background: A topic as large as communication deserves to be treated as a whole workshop. Obviously, that is not possible in this context. Therefore, the materials that have been selected from the myriad of those available focus briefly on three areas: (1) roles, (2) listening, and (3) face-to-face relationships. The first activity which uses a Fact Sheet and Quiz involves each member and the group. Two other exercises are intended to be of a more personal nature not involving the members as a group. Though the responses to these activities could be shared with others, the decision to do so is left with each person. As leader, it is incumbent on you to provide the participants a workshop atmosphere whereby participants are not forced to divulge their responses to others should they choose not to do so. Some folks won't mind sharing; however, others might feel somewhat embarrassed to do so. These areas of communication were purposely selected for this unit because of their crucial importance in board meetings and because rarely do inservice materials for school boards include these interpersonal communication topics. The purpose of this module is to increase board members' awareness of their own and others' communication roles in board meetings, their ability as good listeners, and their skills in person-to-person relationships. Note that another section in the Board/Administrator Relations workshop addresses communication and would provide additional background information.	
5 min.	Activity 1: Introduce Communications Topic Leader Focus: The brief time available for this module forces the treatment of such a large topic as communications at board meetings to be extremely selective in materials used and the portion of the topic to be covered. Thus, only three areas are the focus: roles, listening, and face-to-face communication. The first activity is an individual and a group exercise while the remaining two are intended to be individual only.	

TIME	MATERIALS

- Points that may be used to introduce this topic include:
  - Workshops on communications typically require a full day or more to begin covering the material available on this important subject.
  - In the few minutes available here, only a portion of the topic will be attempted, namely communication roles at meetings and an exercise on listening and on face-to-face communication.
  - Obviously, communication is what board meetings are all about.
  - The materials used here have been purposely selected because of their vital importance and because they have rarely been made available through school board inservice programs.

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10 min. Activity 2: Fact Sheet and Quiz

Leader Focus: This activity is a good warm up to the topic of communications. It focuses on roles of the chairman, superintendent and board and ways of improving general communication at board meetings. The quiz is intended as an opportunity to interact with one another on the subject more than finding correct "answers."

- Ask participants to turn to page 38 of their booklet and complete the six-item quiz. — Participant Booklet Page 38
- When they have finished, ask them to share their answers and browse through the information provided.
- Conclude the short exercise by reviewing questions raised about the quiz items or sharing possible responses to the quiz as follows:

1. False. Effective communication is a vital ingredient in good board meetings. Poor communication causes problems.

2. False. Cultural differences do exist and often body language, though silent, may "say" even more.

3. False. Many of us act this way; however, our first task is to "hear," the second is to speak. We should note that we have two ears; only one mouth!

4. False. There are effective techniques that help, e.g., the chairman can limit the amount of time for each member to respond or even use a timer with a bell or light on it!

5. False. Open meeting laws specify "where" communication is to take place, i.e., in public. Open meetings may require even greater skill in communication.

6. False. Prior to their need, effective boards carefully outline and agree on procedures they will use during controversy.

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15 min. Activity 3: How Good a Listener Are You?

Leader Focus: This exercise is addressed to individuals only. Listening is a very private and personal trait. This activity serves as a self-examination of the basic elements of this skill.

o Points that can be stressed include:

— There are at least two parts to listening:

1. How you think and feel about it

2. How you act as a result

— Listening has been called an art because its skills need to be carefully cultivated and expertly used.

TIME		MATERIALS
	— Many of us take listening for granted—it was something that came with birth!	
	— The exercise on page 40 of your booklet helps you examine some of your listening attitudes and actions.	Participant Booklet Page 40
	o Ask participants to:	
	— Read each of the 20 items and circle the number which represents their answer.	
	— Total responses (number) to these items and put the number at the bottom of the page.	
	o Tell participants that according to this exercise if your score is:	
	— 75 or more, you are a good listener	
	— 50-75, you are an average listener	
	— Below 50, you are a poor listener	
	o Conclude this activity using such comments as:	
	— The score you obtained is for your own personal information. If you wish to share it, that is your decision.	
	— How does a person become a better listener? (Use information from ratings such as the one above and work at improving those areas in which you rated lower, etc.)	
15-20 min.	Activity 4: Improving Face-to-Face Communication	
	Leader Focus: This self-evaluation activity is to help participants think about how they communicate with others in face-to-face situations. The information resulting from it may be used to set personal goals for improvement. Again, it is not expected that the results will be shared with others. Some people may choose to do so; however, that is their personal decision.	

TIME			MATERIALS
2-3 min.	o	Some points that may be used to introduce this activity are: — The public image of the board depends a great deal on how well individual members communicate with each other. — Some of us have given little or no thought to the way we "come across." — There are a variety of elements in good face-to-face relationships and this activity will suggest several of them.	
10 min.	o	Ask participants to turn to page 41 of their booklet.	Participant Booklet Page 41
	o	There are three things to do in this exercise: 1. Read each item and place a check (X) in the appropriate column. 2. If some goals are not listed, use the blank spaces to add them. 3. Review the whole list after you finish and circle <u>three</u> or <u>four</u> skills that would be most valuable for you to improve at this time.	
5 min.	o	When participants have finished, conclude the exercise by reminding them that this was a self-evaluation activity, and deciding whether or not they wish to share the results is a personal decision. General feelings regarding the value of the exercise can be shared, e.g., did you find this a helpful exercise? If so, why?	
2-3 min.	o	Summarize the module by reviewing that the purpose was to look briefly at the roles that are played at board meetings, how to be a good listener and a self evaluation of face-to-face communication skills.	

TIME			MATERIALS
5 min.	o	Finally, ask participants to turn to page 44 of their booklet where they have opportunity to rate their own school board communication and ask them to add thoughts and ideas they may have gained for improving it.	Participant Booklet Page 44

UNIT 6: TIME MANAGEMENT

TIME		MATERIALS
Total Time: 55-60 min.	Background: Time, time, time. We never seem to have enough of it. Yet there are ways in which we can manage our time in order to do the high priority things of life. Board members, being volunteers, give of their precious time to carry out their responsibilities. Since many board members are fully employed persons, time at board meetings represents what otherwise might be "leisure" time. Once a board member, the complexities of the task often overwhelm board people: "There is so much to be done and so little time." This section discusses some general aspects of time management, e.g., time wasters, causes and solutions, and ways to improve uses of time. It looks at the cost of time and some ways of judging time priorities. The emphasis shifts away from the individual board member to the board as a whole by examining how the board uses its time. Finally, using some recent research, an activity concludes this unit by having individuals check items in their lives that may be causing stress and thus "stealing" time.	
5 min.	o Introduce this module by using such questions as these for a warm up: — How many of you have said something like this during the past week, "We just don't have time for that," or, "I sure wish we could take time to...."? Are board meetings this way too? Why is it we feel so pressed for time? o Additional points that may help orient participants to this module include: — Unless we use our time the way we plan, someone else will. — Busy people usually get more done because they have organized themselves to accomplish certain priorities. — People who cannot find time to plan the use of their time often pay a price in frustration, lack of accomplishment, stress and even poor health.	

TIME		MATERIALS

- Tell participants that materials used in this unit focus on general information about time-wasters--causes and solutions, hourly/yearly costs of time, high priority usages of time, assess how boards use meeting time, and help examine factcrs in the lives of board members that may be causing stress and robbing time from them.

Activity 1: Fact Sheet and Quiz

10 min. Leader Focus: This activity is intended to help get participants involved and thinking about the uses of time. It looks at both the use of personal and board meeting time.

- Some points to cover include:
  - This activity examines the causes of non-productive meetings and possible solutions.
  - The short quiz asks you to think about some general time management problems.
- Ask participants to turn to page 45 of their booklet and complete the seven-item quiz. — Participant Booklet Page 45
- When they have finished ask them to share their "answers" with others at their table. Do they agree on all items? Ask them to find out why different opinions exist.
- Conclude the exercise using such points as:
  - Meeting efficiency has a place but not at the expense of other things valued by members, e.g., attending to good human relationships, getting to know one another, etc.
  - Recall that local situations vary, causing differing responses to be given. Elaborating on the answers to the quiz may be helpful using information such as the following.
    1. True. Good planning includes a proper agenda, open and honest communication, well prepared participants, time for review of important materials, etc.

2. True. Use board time periodically to analyze how the board spends its time to discover if members are satisfied. If not, set goals that change it.

3. False. Effective chairmen are always open to ideas for improvement and would welcome suggestions.

4. True. The result is often very poor meetings. Good leadership attends to the subject on the agenda, watches time carefully, allows all sides of a question to be explored fairly and uses decision-making processes skillfully.

5. True. Effective boards try to clearly define problems, seek good information, compare and evaluate alternatives prior to coming to a decision.

6. True. Short summaries of wordy and technical information help board members to cover it all in time available as well as to understand it.

7. True. Emergency board meetings have their place when required. However, adequate planning by administrative staff members can anticipate many situations and prevent crises. Good policies also aid!

Activity 2: Idea Papers: What is Your Time Worth and the 80/20 Rule

5-10 min. Leader Focus: Two pieces of information are used in this activity to emphasize (1) the cost of time and (2) the importance of attending to high priority items. The exercise which follows illustrates both the use of board meeting time and setting agenda priorities. This is a good short lead-in activity prior to that exercise.

TIME		MATERIALS
	o Ask participants to turn to pages 47-48 of their booklet and examine both of these pieces of information.	Participant Booklet Pages 47-48
	o Allow brief comments and discussions to take place at the tables and/or as a total group before concluding this part with such points as: — Think what the cost of each board meeting would be if hourly totals were added together for all participants of a board meeting! — What are some low priority items at meetings that seem to use more board time than they are really worth? How might they be handled? (Use a consent agenda or put them last on the agenda.)	
	o If you tell someone you're out of money, you may well be. If you tell someone you're out of time, you aren't. Time continues, ad infinitum. We never run out of time! Therefore, time management has nothing to do with managing time. It is really management of priorities.	

Activity 3: How Does Your Board Spend Its Time and Resources?

20-30 min.

Leader Focus: This exercise illustrates both the use of board meeting time and setting agenda priorities. As leader you will need to prepare the participants for this exercise. A short introduction is sufficient. Ask the group to suggest different things (resources) that they believe affect student learning. They may need some prompting to list such items as adequate facilities, textbooks, teachers, libraries, etc. When you feel they understand what is meant by "resources that affect student learning," you are ready to introduce the exercise.

	o Ask participants to turn to page 49 of their booklet, listen carefully and follow the directions. Read them aloud. Wait for them to select their answers. Proceed until all items have been completed.	Participant Booklet Page 49

TIME MATERIALS

Directions:

1. On the space provided, list up to ten resources within your school district which affect student learning.

2. Now, using a scale of 1 (low) to 10 (high), assign a number to each item according to how you feel it has greatest impact on learning.

3. Next, put a dollar ($) sign in front of three items for which your board spends most of its funds.

4. Now, put a T in front of the three items that regularly take up most time at your school board meetings.

5. Put a P in front of items about which parents and students most often talk to you.

6. Put an S in front of the items teachers and other staff members most often bring to your attention.

7. Put a figure 5 in front of any item which you think your board may not have control of in five years.

8. Finally, go down your list and place beside each item the approximate date when your board discussed this item.

- Allow time for participants to share their results with others at the table.

- It is very important to conduct a debriefing session with the total group. Use some or all of the open-ended questions at the conclusion of the exercise.

- Close the exercise by discussing what implications these insights may have for future meetings of their board.

TIME		MATERIALS

Activity 4: Life Change Indicators for Controlling Stress

10-15 min.

Leader Focus: One factor that robs us of time is stress. Especially is this true when several situations begin accumulating on us. Sometimes it is difficult for us to realize that we are under stress and what is causing it. This exercise, drawn from recent research, suggests to us that there is a hierarchy among these factors and that if several of them occurred within the past two years we may be under severe personal stress. Realizing that this may be true helps us to know that stress may be affecting how we use our time. A re-examination may reveal that we could avoid letting stress infringe unnecessarily on our time.

- This personal checklist need not be shared with others unless participants decide to do so.

- Ask participants to turn to page 51 of their booklet and listen for instructions: — Participant Booklet Page 51

  1. Read each item, and for each item you have experienced within the past two years place a check mark (✓) in the space provided.

  2. If you have experienced two or more of any item, make that number of marks in the space.

  3. After you have completed all items, multiply the number of marks by the number in parenthesis and then total all the points at the bottom of the page.

- When total scores have been recorded, share with the group what the researcher says about the scores:

  — Below 150 points--Standing on safe ground. (Chances are about 1 in 3 that a serious health change may occur in the next years.)

TIME		MATERIALS

— 150-300 points—You may feel earth tremors and notice "geographical personal faults." (Chances rise approximately 20 percent for a change in health.)

— Over 300 points—A personal earthquake is near. (Be sure your health insurance is paid. Your chances for a physical illness to occur within the next year are almost 90 percent.)

o Conclude this exercise by reminding participants that this is for their personal information and does not need to be shared unless they decide to do so.

Activity 5: Summary of Unit

5-10 min. Leader Focus: This is the closing activity in which a review is made of the different activities that were included and their purpose, e.g., (1) the Fact Sheet and Quiz, (2) the two idea papers: What is Your Time Worth and the 80/20 Rule, (3) How Does Your Board Spend Its Time and Resources, and finally, (4) Life Change Indicators for Controlling Stress.

o Ask participants to turn to page 53 of their booklet and rate time management practices for themselves and for their school board, adding thoughts and ideas for both. — Participant Booklet Page 53

UNIT 7: LEGAL ASPECTS OF SCHOOL BOARD MEETINGS

TIME		MATERIALS
Total Time: 25-30 min.	Background: Legal requirements and restrictions for school board meetings do exist. While some of these legal factors are similar from state to state, many of them also vary. Therefore, this unit has as its purpose to:	

1. Alert you as leader that legal aspects of school board meetings often dictate what procedures local boards are expected to follow within the state

2. Provide an example of what legal requirements exist in one state that can serve as a guideline for developing the needed information for your state

Some state school board associations have already compiled these requirements for distribution to their members. If so, it can be used together with the other units. If the information needed is scattered in different locations, a decision will be required to determine whether or not to expend the effort to compile it. Some states have utilized graduate students at colleges and universities who obtain credit for gathering and compiling this information. Regardless of how it is done, the state example included within this unit shows the categories that would help organize the data. It also shows the specific detail that is often included in such requirements. It may be anticipated that other states may have less or more than what the example shows. Frequently state requirements for local board meetings vary with the size of school districts.

The activities proposed assume that state laws have been assembled outlining the requirements to be followed by local boards when they meet.

Activity 1: Introduce Topic

5 min. Leader Focus: This activity is for the purpose of reminding board members that state legal requirements do exist and must be followed for their school board meetings.

TIME	MATERIALS

- Use these points to explain that:
  - Laws passed by the legislature specify certain requirements for school board meetings. A typical example is one for executive sessions.
  - Some state laws cover subjects in a general manner and expect local boards to make them specific, e.g., the state may specify that a board meets at least once per month. A local board must then designate the time and place of these meetings.
  - District size often determines what procedures must be followed according to the law.
  - The materials presented here pertain only to that state since laws vary from state to state.

Activity 2: Legal Aspects of School Board Meetings

20-25 min.

Leader Focus: The purpose of this activity is to alert participants to the fact that state laws do exist that govern how they conduct school board meetings. By reviewing these state laws, participants can ascertain the degree to which their own board is conforming to their state laws for school board meetings.

- Ask participants to turn to page 54 of their booklet for a listing of the state law requirements for school board meetings in their state. — Participant Booklet Page 54
- Ask them to read through the information collected and when they have finished discuss any questions that surface with others at their table.

TIME		MATERIALS
	o If these discussions have caused differences of opinion to develop, stop the activity and focus attention on the specific issues. Use the resources in the group to assist in clarification of the problem or issue. As leader, it may be necessary for you to elaborate on the information; or if it becomes technical and requires legal interpretation, you may need to offer to find out what is thought best by legal counsel and report back to them at a later date.	
	o Conclude the activity by asking:	
	— To what degree do you feel your board is in conformance with state laws?	
	-- Executive sessions frequently cause local boards difficulty. Is this an area of concern for you and your board? If so, why?	
5 min.	o Ask participants to turn to page 59 of their booklet and rate how well they conform to state legal requirements for board meetings. Ask them to add their thoughts and ideas in the space provided.	Participant Booklet Page 59

EFFECTIVE SCHOOL BOARD MEETINGS: WORKSHOP SUMMARY

Total Time: 10-15 min.

To the Leader: Effective workshop planning includes sufficient time for closing it in a proper manner. Workshop endings may be every bit as important as introductions! This material provides ideas and activities for summarizing the Effective School Board Meetings workshop. It is assumed that regardless of the number of modules used--one or all seven--these materials can be used to end the workshop.

Activity 1: Rating and Idea Summary

5-20 min. depending on time & number of persons from the same board

Leader Focus: Often a workshop is found to be worthwhile if one good usable idea can be found that can be put to work immediately. This Summary Form is intended to assist participants to recall ideas, thoughts or suggestions for improving their own board meetings as a result of the stimulation from the workshop.

- Review for participants the broad purposes of this Effective School Board Meetings workshop and include the objectives for each module used.
- Next, ask participants to turn to page 60 of their booklet to the Summary Form. Suggest that each person review the rating sheets he/she used for each unit. On the Summary Form under the appropriate heading suggest that they assemble and record their ideas from these individual sheets. The purpose of this activity is to preserve ideas, thoughts or suggestions stimulated during the workshop so that they may be shared with their other board members. (Participant Booklet Page 60)
- If time is available board members from the same board can share and discuss the various ideas collected.

> Helpful Hint: If several participants from a board have recorded a number of ideas and time is too short for them to be considered, an agreement could be made that all items will be assembled, typed and become an agenda for a later board study session.

TIME		MATERIALS

Activity 2: Workshop Evaluation

5 min.

Leader Focus: Evaluation of the workshop is important. It will set the tone for future meetings by letting participants know that the association is sincerely interested in their personal reactions. Often helpful comments and/or questions not openly expressed during the workshop are found in these feedback forms. Obviously, the association is anxious to learn how the workshop was received in order to continue and/or modify sessions in the future. These should be compelling reasons for gathering evaluation information at the conclusion of the meeting.

- Explain that the Rating Forms they used after each module represent one type of evaluation of this workshop. The items they recorded represent possibilities for improving school board meetings, which was one of the basic purposes of the workshop.

- Ask participants to turn to page 62 of their booklet for the Workshop Evaluation form. Have them complete it, tear it out of their booklet and leave it at the door as they leave. — Participant Booklet Page 62

- Thank them for their attendance and adjourn the workshop.

SECTION 4: EVALUATING THE WORKSHOP

EFFECTIVE SCHOOL BOARD MEETINGS MEETINGS

Materials Development and Testing

Evaluation of the workshop is important. It will set the tone for future meetings by letting participants know that the association is sincerely interested in their personal reactions. Often helpful comments and/or questions not openly expressed during the workshop are found in these feedback forms. Obviously, the association is anxious to learn how the workshop was received in order to continue and/or modify sessions in the future. These should be compelling reasons for gathering evaluation information at the conclusion of the meeting.

Why Evaluate?

Continuous participant feedback to you as you present the workshop can be helpful in several ways:

- Personal growth and development--Whether you are new to workshop presentations or a seasoned veteran, participant feedback can be helpful in your personal and professional development. Participant evaluation of your presentation style, of how helpful you were in their learning, of how you handle time and materials can be invaluable to you as a source of growth.

- Adapting the workshop--Participant feedback can give you ideas and suggestions which will be helpful to you in planning future presentations of the workshop. Perhaps more time needs to be spent in one area. Perhaps objectives need to be made clearer. Perhaps participants grew too tired during a two-hour evening presentation. These participant perceptions and feelings will provide information for you to consider as you continuously adapt and modify the workshop in successive presentations.

- Improving materials and activities--Participant feedback will give you clues as to how to improve upon the basic workshop structure and materials. Perhaps you will need to add more specific legal or statutory information about your state. Perhaps you will need to provide a description of the legislative process in your state, or a list of legislators and districts.

Again, participant feedback can be an important basis for decisions like these.

What to Evaluate

An adequate evaluation of a workshop provides you, as workshop leader, the kinds of information you need to determine how well the presentation achieved your objectives. It also gives you an indication of how well the presentation met the needs and expectations of participants.

- Objectives—The objectives of the workshop are stated in terms of knowledge/information which participants are expected to gain, skills they are expected to develop, or attitudes they are expected to have as a result of the experience.

  Evaluation of objectives can involve questions of clarity (Are the objectives clear to participants?), questions of appropriateness or match (Do the objectives meet participants' needs and expectations?) and questions of achievement (Do participants gain in information, skills and attitudes?).

  The first two kinds of questions are relatively easy to assess during the workshop. The third, while very important, is the most difficult to assess.

- Presenter—The skills of the presenter in conducting the workshop is another area for evaluation.

  Questions in this area might focus on the presenter's delivery of lecturettes, helpfulness in workshop activities, knowledge of the subject, and other concerns.

- Workshop processes—These include the procedures and activities designed to result in learning. Among the workshop processes are lecturettes, small and large group discussions, quizzes and questionnaires.

  Evaluation of these processes involves questions regarding their contribution to participants' understanding, learning and skill development.

Questions for Evaluating This Workshop

The questions below are those included in the participant booklet for evaluation of presentations of this workshop. They represent a comprehensive and adequate set of workshop evaluation questions, speaking to objectives, presenter, and processes.

EFFECTIVE SCHOOL BOARD MEETINGS WORKSHOP

Evaluation Form

Your reactions to this workshop will aid your association in improving future workshops on this topic. No names please. Thank you!

1. My overall reaction to this workshop:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Very Low			So-So			Very High

Comments:

_____

_____

2. What was the most helpful idea you gained from this workshop?

_____

_____

3. In this workshop I'd like more of:

_____

_____

3. In this workshop I'd suggest less:

_____

_____

5. Please rate the leader of the workshop.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Very Low			So-So			Very High

5. General comments, ideas or suggestions.

_____

_____

_____

SECTION 5: BACKGROUND MATERIALS

EFFECTIVE SCHOOL BOARD MEETINGS

There are three papers in this section:

1. "About Meetings," a concept paper by Ray E. Jongeward

2. "The School Board Meeting is More Than a Meeting," a background paper by Ray E. Jongeward

3. A Research Excerpt, from Professionals Versus the Public: Attitudes, Communication, and Response in School Districts, by Harmon Zeigler and Harvey J. Tucker, Longman Press, New York, 1980

4. Board Spats Getting You Down? Here's How to Resolve Them by Carroll Johnson, Updating School Board Policies, Volume 13, Number 4, April 1982, National School Boards Association

You will find reading these will provide useful background information for the workshop on Effective School Board Meetings.

ABOUT MEETINGS

A Concept Paper

Most of the learning, planning and doing in this world happens in groups conducting their activities through meetings. This includes all types of meetings such as seminars, workshops, conferences, etc.

Think back over the past month. How many meetings have you attended? Were they all "good" ones? Probably you felt frustrated some of the time or much of the time by the lack of involvement, productivity, excitement, satisfaction and responsibility-taking by the members of these groups. As a leader or member you may have wished that members of the group would become more active—more "turned on" and responsible as planners or action takers.

Unfortunately, for most of us, we have had little experience and a minimum of training as to how to make our meetings more effective. We attend them—sometimes willingly, sometimes not. There are times when meetings seem productive and satisfying. Why is this so?

There are some reasons that might explain why it is difficult for many of us to become actively involved participants in the groups we attend. Among them are the following:

- We have been taught ever since we were small--in the family and at school—to wait for someone else to go first. Others, especially adults, defined what was expected, what was okay to do, what would be "graded" as good behavior or good work.

- Often, we learned that the safest way to express our negative feelings was to be quiet, silent, nonparticipating and, thus, we became bored.

- Some of us reacted to those who did participate and responded by calling them "eager beavers" or "brown nosers." We did not speak up, talk back or test our ideas in the group because we might not be accepted by other members of the class or group.

- Few of us have had the good fortune to belong to groups that developed and owned their own goals, plans and actions.

- We have rarely experienced alternatives to the way meetings have always been conducted.

For these and other reasons, it is not surprising that we find it frustrating when a group to which we belong does not provide a satisfying, exciting experience. We know that many challenges face groups, and we would like to know how to deal with such situations as:

- How to turn apathy and indifference into involvement, concern and ownership

- How to create a group from a collection of individuals

- How to manage difficult members--the long-winded talker, the constant disrupter, the member with a hidden agenda, the joker and many others
- How to use conflict constructively
- How to get silent members to participate
- How to maintain control of a meeting
- How to arrive at a decision
- How to ensure that decisions are implemented

Many of us have done well when faced with situations like these; however, most of us could have improved our performance with additional training. Knowledge of the complexities of group interaction and appreciation of the dynamics of group behavior can do much to improve productivity in group meetings.

What is it, then, that we are trying to change about the meetings that we are frustrated by and often dislike? There are several things, including:

1. The leader of a group is chosen from a selected few who have the power, drive and control of those who follow. The leader gets the job done as efficiently and quickly as possible.

2. The focus is fundamentally on the task. There is no place for the feelings of the members, reactions about the task, hidden motives, etc.

3. Group members may advise, but leaders should make decisions. The leader's job is to listen but try to get a quick vote before too many points of view cause confusion. If decision making were shared, it would make lines of authority and responsibility unclear.

4. Interactions should be ignored as much as possible. Personal feelings and interactions are secondary to the task. Attention of members is on the agenda and their ideas orchestrated by the leader.

5. The leader should stay in control. Strong and forceful leaders are needed to keep meetings from being led astray by aggressive or attractive members. Discussions, if left alone, will always become aimless, irresponsible, and divisive.

6. The leader should maintain a power position. Leaders are leaders because their competence and prestige have been recognized. Weak members like strong leaders because it provides safety and security. The leader watches for threats to his leadership and fights, if necessary, to maintain his/her authority.

7. Feelings should be dampened. Meetings require logical thinking, not emotional outbursts. Members should be discouraged from expressing feelings rather than facts. The leader reminds the group when conflicts surface that maturity demands emotional control. He or she may adjourn the meeting until members calm down.

Meetings characterized by these practices produce results. Decisions are made--sometimes to be unmade at the next meeting. Order is maintained but often at a cost. Often, valuable contributions are not made because the discussion was so tightly controlled. Members often feel apathetic because they were not actively involved. Conflicts often smoulder under the surface. Members usually feel that the meeting was railroaded and their time wasted.

Meetings that have been described are based on an approach to leadership that focuses most of the power, authority and responsibility on the leader. The energies of members are seldom released when their resources are denied. Members never learn to accept responsibility.

Decisions in this type of meeting come easily. The critical problem arises when the decision is to be implemented. Because members have had no real part in making the decision, they often show little enthusiasm for carrying it out.

Meetings can be different! Growing out of the research and experimentation of the past forty years there is much information useful for the leader and for the members of the group. The approach is group-centered rather than leader-centered and dominated. The importance of the group's task is still recognized, but the complexities of group behavior are also taken into account. Members' interaction and the needs, purposes and emotional reactions of individuals have a profound effect on the task and its solution. Therefore, these need to be understood and appropriately dealt with. The basic elements of a group-centered approach to conducting meetings are:

1. Leadership--a shared function. Members or leaders may help move the group toward three goals: (1) the accomplishment of the task, (2) the resolution of internal group problems, and (3) the ability of the members to work together effectively as a group.

   A sense of teamwork and group morale is established when leadership is shared. The feeling of satisfaction, recognition, and power that accompanies it assures that all the resources of the group will be used productively.

2. Active listening. Leader and members listen actively to determine when such functions as clarifying, summarizing, and preventing too rapid closure are needed. Nonverbal clues are also important cues that detract or contribute to the productivity of the group.

3. Building and maintenance. A major task for the leader and members is the development of a mature, productive group. Responsibility is increasingly accepted among the membership for recognizing and solving internal problems and improving membership ability. Members learn to diagnose destructive or disturbing behavior, then intervene constructively in order to improve group functioning and hold more effective meetings.

4. Leadership--service to the group. Leaders assist members by developing trust and by enabling members to express freely their feelings and reactions without fear of reprisal. It includes helping the group accomplish its task, deal with internal problems, accept

conflict as a group problem, etc. The leader may serve as a facilitator, consultant, advisor, teacher, observer and participant. Active involvement of all members of the group is basic to ownership of decisions and accepting responsibility for them.

5. Paying attention to feelings, emotions, individual purposes and hidden agendas of the members. These and others like them are all legitimate facts that impact the group's work. These often hidden factors must be made known to the group. Items on the listed agenda frequently cannot be dealt with until the emotional climate within the group surfaces and is worked through.

6. Recognizing that members are a group--not a collection of individuals. The morale and feelings of the group as a whole often change and affect the discussions and decisions of the group. All members need to become aware of this fact and utilize it so that satisfaction results, productivity is high and the group continues to grow and mature.

Earlier in this paper, we said that there were some things about meetings that we would like to change. These factors have been outlined above. However, we still want tasks completed. How will they be accomplished? This paper forwards the concept that attention to internal group processes and to individual goals of members is vitally important to effective meetings. The premise here is that a successful meeting is one in which:

- People leave feeling satisfied.
- People look forward to the next meeting.
- Everyone agrees that something got done.
- Decisions are understood.
- Both facts and feelings enter into discussions about issues.
- People use their skills and develop new ones.
- Conflicts are dealt with and not avoided.
- Rewards and compliments are handed out during the meeting.

References:

- Taking Your Meetings Out of the Doldrums. Eva Schindler-Rainman, Ronald Lippitt, Jack Cole. La Jolla, CA: University Associates, 1977.
- Making Meetings Work. Leland Bradford. La Jolla, CA: University Associates, 1976.
- Making Change. Eileen Guthrie and Sam Miller. Minneapolis, Minnesota, 1977.

BACKGROUND PAPER

THE SCHOOL BOARD MEETING IS MORE THAN A MEETING!

Introduction

When you stop and think about it, school board meetings contain a bit of magic. It is during these official meetings--and only during these meetings—that dentists, bankers, salespeople, homemakers, and farmers are transformed and assume the legal responsibility for governing our public schools. At all other times, these people are still school board members, but as tradition and new state sunshine laws mandate, only at official meetings can a school board conduct legal business.*

However, there is more to it than just a "meeting"! It is during a school board meeting that the public is offered opportunity to "look through the window at education" in their community. Sometimes these "windows" are sparkling bright. At other times, they may be dirty or even broken. Thus, the school board "window" (meeting) is an important factor in how citizens view education within their own community. It is at the school board meeting that much of the local public image of education is created.

In effective school board meetings, things usually run smoothly: e.g., good decisions are made; communication is easy and open; there is a feeling of accomplishment; members leave feeling satisfied and look forward to the next meeting. In such meetings, school board members derive much of their satisfaction and motivation for serving on this important public body.

But like all magic, little is known about school board meetings themselves. What are the elements of a good meeting? How can school boards learn to improve their meetings? Does past experience and recent research suggest successful strategies for developing and conducting board meetings?

Why are school board meetings the way they are? Several answers come to mind.

1. Tradition: Past practices for conducting meetings play a large part in what they are today.

2. Lack of attention: Citizens and professionals alike have attended hundreds, perhaps thousands, of meetings without much thought about what makes them good or a waste of time.

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*Adapted from "Why School Board Meetings Are the Way They Are," by Paul Blanchard. NSBA Journal, 1975.

3. Manipulation: Professional educators, until recently at least, often "programmed" school board meetings to fulfill their own goals for the district. Board members usually accepted this scheduling as the work of the board. Individual or collective concerns of the board members were often not considered as valid meeting topics.

4. Research: Only recently has social and behavioral science attacked the processes and techniques that can be employed to produce more effective meetings.

Thus, the strategy of this workshop is to help school board members realize that their meetings are:

1. Open to scrutiny

2. A way to accomplish the goals of the District

3. More satisfying when they utilize better practices

Obviously, one short workshop cannot be expected to make great changes in meeting practices. Part of the strategy, therefore, involves providing a variety of ideas centered around basic elements of effective meetings. The ideas presented are seen as seeds that might be used to produce a growing awareness of how meetings can be improved. "Shoulds," "oughts" and "answers" are avoided, thus allowing acceptance and/or rejection of the materials presented.

The workshop is intended to be informal, low key and as experiential as possible. Quizzes and activities are used to involve the participants in discussion with each other and the leader. Since the workshop contains a large quantity of material, the time spent on any one part is short. Keep the activity moving quickly to prevent the meeting from stagnating.

Time is always a pressing matter during a workshop. This one is no exception! In order to focus attention on specific elements contained within the design, participants may be offered an opportunity to choose which elements they wish to emphasize. As leader, this means that you must be prepared to be flexible to comply with their wishes. Further, it is essential to have the materials associated with each element readily available. Organizing the sections separately (complete with handouts) aids in following this procedure.

Another option for saving time is to provide a packet for each participant complete with all handout materials. The disadvantages of this method are that people get lost in the materials and become occupied with parts not in use at the moment!

RECENT RESEARCH*

Harman Zeigler, political science professor, University of Oregon, conducted a study of school board governance during 1977-78. His study covered eleven large school districts (over 50,000 students) throughout the United States. A brief summary of his findings regarding school board meetings follows.

A comprehensive observation of school board meetings in eleven school districts led us to conclude:

- School district officials are the dominant actors. Public attendance and participation are low, and are concentrated in a few meetings. Moreover, public attendance and participation at a school board meeting rarely result in a decision at that meeting. Generally speaking, the meetings with greatest public attendance are not meetings of greatest public demand.

- The topics of supposedly crucial importance to school districts do not occupy most of the school board agenda. Routine housekeeping matters are the object of school board discussions. The distribution of discussions among topic areas is remarkably similar across school districts.

- The agenda-setting function is dominated by professional administrators.

- School board meetings are forums of information exchange and supportive demands. Negative demands are rare.

- Administrators regularly make their policy preferences known.

- Boards accept administrative recommendations approximately 99 percent of the time.

- Boards vote unanimously 85 percent of the time. Dissent from majority opinion is a rare and virtually random phenomenon.

- Public input is normally expressed by educational groups speaking in support of proposed policy.

- Dissent, although low, is normally expressed by laymen unaffiliated with formal organizations.

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*Tucker, Harvey J., and Zeigler, Harmon. Professionals Versus the Public: Attitudes, Communication, and Response in School Districts. New York: Longman Press, 1980.

The substance of the typical school board agenda is unlikely to stimulate widespread lay attendance and participation. Issues deemed important by both experts and laymen are not often discussed. To be sure, school boards must devote part of their public meetings to ratifying experts' proposals on administrative matters. It is entirely reasonable that lay deference to administrative expertise should be the model pattern of behavior. It seems less reasonable that school board deference to administrative expertise should be the nearly exclusive pattern of behavior.

Low public participation and high board reliance on experts are both a function of the routine nature of the school board agenda. Since the agenda setting function is dominated by experts, the emphasis on routine can hardly be regarded as a coincidence. In short, the relevant query is not why do lay board members defer to experts on technical housekeeping matters. The relevant question is why do lay board members and the lay public allow experts to dominate all phases of the policy-making process?

BOARD SPATS GETTING YOU DOWN? HERE'S HOW TO RESOLVE THEM*

Robert Frost once described free verse as similar to playing tennis without a net. Effective school boards meet a similar challenge.

Just as a tennis pro can pace the lines of the court blindfolded, board members observe "boundaries of play" that often seem invisible, and they do so without the aid of an umpire to remind them that those boundaries exist. The success of most boards is testimony to the fact that their members have internalized these boundaries of play. They almost always recognize whether behavior is within--or outside--the field of fair play. Let's see how they do it.

The first, and most important, boundary of play is defined by the individual board member's role in relation to the board's role as a whole. All powers of the board lie in its action as a group, and as a group only when in authorized session. The fact is, nearly all problems in intraboard relations are caused by the failure of individuals to observe their responsibilities to the board as a unit.

Identify with group

It is not difficult to understand: Americans are by and large individualistic. We do not instinctively strike a balance between the requirements of the group and the integrity of the individual. Instead, we tend to perceive it as an endemic conflict. A person of achievement, who has won election or appointment to the board as an individual, may fail to understand that he or she has no individual authority. Individual board members exercise their authority over district affairs only as they vote to take action at a legal meeting of the board. Once this is clearly understood, it becomes equally clear that success in ensuring quality education for the district's children will be won by the board collectively or not at all. An effective board member always works to strengthen the effectiveness of the group. Alone, an individual can sometimes cause a board to fail; success will always be the result of a team effort.

How can a board ensure that its members identify with the group? Two ways:

- A policy on board member authority. It's essential for all boards to have a written policy that delineates the boundaries of authority of individual members. The policy should simply remind board members that they have no legal authority to act on their own; that only at a legally convened meeting may board members, as a group, take action. (EPS file reference: BOARD MEMBER AUTHORITY, code BBAA)

*Carroll Johnson, Updating School Board Policies, Volume 13, Number 4, April 1982, National School Boards Association.

- Board member training. Unless board members know about and observe board policies, the policies won't amount to much. The policy on board member authority should be reviewed at orientation sessions for new board members, and reviewed at other times as needed. Board members can know they're observing the policy when they can answer this question affirmatively: "Will my action strengthen the effectiveness of the board as a group?" (EPS file reference: BOARD MEMBER DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES, code BHB)

Follow board rules

The second most important boundary on board member behavior is prescribed by the board's own rules on the conduct of its meetings. As the regular board meeting is the only time the board can conduct its official business, it is critical that these meetings be conducted properly. Board members are elected to represent the best interests of the community, not react to the popular opinions or passions of the moment. To maintain that poise of objective leadership, the board should always maintain a certain dignity in its proceedings--and individual board members must observe the group's meeting procedures. Again, there are two ways to ensure that this happens:

- Policy on meeting procedures. A clearly defined meeting structure enhances the prestige and credibility of the board to the community as being open to public views, but not to public pressure. It is best to set out this structure as written policy. Effective boards often structure their meetings as follows: Public hearings and board discussion are kept separate. After citizens have had an opportunity to address an issue on the agenda, the board conducts its own discussion. No public interjections are permitted during the board's discussion. When that discussion has proceeded to a consensus in the view of the president, a formal vote is taken. A roll-call vote is desirable, but a recorded vote is absolutely necessary. A perceived consensus is not enough. After all items on the agenda have been disposed of in this fashion, the meeting is opened to all public comments, suggestions, or new business. There are some exceptions to this pattern. As a courtesy, some boards place public participation as the first item on the agenda. Also, boards can discuss matters relating to personnel in private and, in most cases, should do so. Certain questions of law should be discussed in private session, too. (EPS file reference: BOARD MEETING PROCEDURES, code BDD)

- More board member training. Again, board members, both novice and veteran, must be trained to observe meeting procedures.

Earn respect and authority

Of course, a rational structure alone is not enough to ensure effective group action. That point brings us to a third boundary of play: A board's authority is not simply granted by legal statute. It must be earned by behavior worthy of it; authority cannot exist without respect. One seldom finds good schools in a community where the board of education is not respected.

An interesting aspect of human nature is that most people will take an individual at his or her own self-evaluation. The same holds true for school boards. If the board treats itself with respect, it will probably be treated with the same respect by the community. On the other hand, a board that bickers, that has members treating each other with contempt, will in all likelihood receive the same from the community, and deserve it.

Different viewpoints need not preclude mutual respect. To put it personally, if a fellow board member has lost your respect, and even if that board member treats you with disrespect, you will be undermining the effectiveness of the board as a whole if you compound the problem. If instead you treat that member in public and private with respect, he may mend his ways. At worse, the problem will have been contained, and the destructive influence of that board member may be limited.

Winning respect and authority is also a matter of policy:

- The ethics of boardsmanship. What kind of behavior is productive to the group? Boards that have not thought out an answer to this question should take time to do so, and reduce their discussion to a statement on board member ethics. The statement might include comments on the importance of following board meeting procedures, being prepared for every meeting, listening courteously to opposing viewpoints, and so on. The National School Boards Association and, very likely, your state school boards association have published codes of ethics for board members that will be a helpful resource in this effort.

- Policy review sessions. The board that recently works out a policy on ethics will have reached a consensus as to what constitutes effective behavior. But what about new members? Again, a review of policy is an excellent vehicle for orienting new board members--and for reminding veteran board members of productive behavior.

Listen, listen

Before leaving the subject of ethical behavior, there is one kind of behavior to be considered most important: listening.

In meetings, you can show respect not only through courteous expression, but also through both the appearance and fact of attentive listening to your fellow board members and to the public. This is one talent many public bodies lack. How often have you attended meetings in which board members whisper to each other during public hearings, and even during the comments of a colleague? For a board member, no skill is more important than listening, if that board member is to fulfill the public trust. A board member should never attend a meeting with a closed mind about any item on the agenda. The success of the meetings, and therefore of the board's entire function, rests upon the reasoned exchange of information and views with colleagues and the public before the resolution of a vote. A board member who does not listen is simply not doing his job.

Uphold group discussions

Listening does not mean the listener agrees with the speaker; but it does lead us to the fourth boundary on an individual board member's actions: When all discussion is over and the vote has been taken, the successful board member recognizes that the board as a whole has taken a stand that he or she must uphold.

More succinctly, it is the responsibility of each individual member to uphold the collective action. If, in an extreme case, your conscience requires continued opposition, it must be within the formal structure of the board's operation. If you wish to reintroduce a topic to the agenda for reconsideration or amendment, then do so. But conscience is not a license for behind-the-scenes politicking or sabotage. Undermining the effectiveness of the board on one issue will in the end undermine its effectiveness on all issues. A board that fails to pull together as a team will fail to accomplish anything of educational significance.

There are some decisions over which continued opposition after a vote is disastrous, and some where a unanimous vote is highly desirable. The annual budget, bond issues, the closing of schools due to declining enrollment: These are issues on which the board must stand or fall together. Decisions of such moment need the united leadership of the board to win community acceptance.

Support the superintendent

The relationship of the board to the superintendent is even more significant. The superintendent is not simply an employee under the board's authority; the superintendent is the administrative arm through which all the board's actions will take effect. The board-superintendent relationship is a symbiotic one: Each depends on the other.

Without the constructive support of the board, a superintendent will be ineffective. By strengthening the superintendent's hand in the community, the board enhances its own effectiveness. Therefore, all votes relating to the superintendent should be unanimous: whether they be to employ, to extend a contract, or to grant a raise. If the board is unable to maintain a close, harmonious working relationship with its own spokesman, it will seldom have the respect of the community.

Active support by the individual of the group's actions, and of the chief administrator who must implement those actions, is also a legitimate subject for policy. While general support of group action might be included as an important behavior in the board's policy on the ethics of its members, a separate policy on board-superintendent relations is a sound idea. This policy should state explicitly that the board and superintendent can expect mutual support. (EPS file reference: BOARD-SUPERINTENDENT RELATIONSHIP, CODE BDC)

Having discussed the proper conduct of meetings, the importance of winning the community's respect through behavior both courteous and dignified, the significance of listening to colleagues and to the public, and the necessity of upholding the board's majority vote, as you know, making it all work can be even harder than it sounds. One thing is evident above all: The individual board members must come to identify themselves with the group effort. They must come to know each other well enough to understand the unique contributions their differing judgments, imaginations, and values can bring to the effectiveness of the board as a whole. And they must give their loyalty to the group by respecting confidences and privileged information, by each carrying his or her own load, and by remembering at all times that they have no individual authority.

The "boundaries of play" are not so invisible for the effective board member--or for the board with written policies that outline these boundaries. Unless policies are practiced and publicized, however, the boundaries may seem invisible at times to friends, constituents, and, occasionally, even school employees. Without a publicized statement, a board member might be asked to make a statement on behalf of the board, and be misunderstood when he explains that only the board president and superintendent are spokesmen. He might be asked to make commitments prior to votes, and be the target of criticism and the recipient of gossip. In sum, he might be assumed to have an authority he knows he lacks. Though his behavior in and out of the board meetings may seem circumscribed, the results will not be. Respect, dignity, and integrity will always be understood in the end and, with the collective authority thus earned, the effectiveness of the school board in achieving quality education for the children of the district will be greatly enhanced.

The Agenda

EFFECTIVE SCHOOL BOARD MEETINGS

KEYS TO SCHOOL BOARDSMANSHIP

C 80

Effective School Board Meetings: The AGENDA

T/F

A True-False Quiz

The agenda for a school board meeting:

_____ 1. ...is a valuable way of communicating.

_____ 2. ...helps control the length of the meeting.

_____ 3. ...can be an important legal record.

_____ 4. ...discourages disruption of the meeting by special interest groups or individuals.

_____ 5. ...is a valuable aid for the chairperson.

_____ 6. ...helps board members to be better prepared.

_____ 7. ...is not necessary in smaller school districts.

_____ 8. ...should only be made available to board members.

_____ 9. ...is decided by the superintendent.

_____ 10. ...is to be followed to the letter to have a good meeting.

Some questions and answers about the school board meeting agenda

WHAT SHOULD THE AGENDA INCLUDE?

The order for conducting the school district's affairs at a board meeting is established in the board's bylaws. The agenda should include topics for discussion, official action and/or information.

WHY USE AN AGENDA?

It provides an orderly way for the school board to accomplish its responsibilities – receiving and sharing information about the schools, and taking the actions necessary for conducting the district's business. It serves as the basis for the presentation of views and expression of concerns by board members, staff and patrons. It is a helpful outline for preparing minutes of the meeting and is a record in itself.

HOW DOES THE AGENDA MAKE A MEETING MORE EFFECTIVE?

- For board members, the agenda identifies items and issues to be discussed and for which advance study may be advisable.
- For the public, it calls attention to matters in which an individual may be especially interested.
- For the staff, it indicates what supporting materials may be needed to assure that the board will have the information necessary to reach the right decision.
- For the board president or chair, the agenda provides the guidelines necessary for conducting the meeting in an efficient, well-organized manner.
- For legal purposes, the agenda is kept on file and can be cited as the record of what transpired, also serving as the basis for preparation of the minutes.
- For the superintendent, as the chief administrative officer and secretary to the board, the agenda provides the means for assuring that items and matters to be reported and/or acted upon will be brought to the board's attention.

HOW ARE AGENDAS PREPARED?

Practices vary, but the common pattern is for the superintendent to prepare the agenda after providing opportunity for board members, staff and others to request that certain items be included. Frequently the superintendent consults with the board president or management team before the final agenda is duplicated.

WHEN IS THE AGENDA MADE AVAILABLE?

Generally, board members receive the agenda and other relevant information a few days in advance of the board meeting. Advance copies also may be given to staff members – particularly those who may have responsibilities relating to items to be considered. Commonly the agenda and other information are shared in advance also with PTA leaders, employee group officers, the press and others having a special interest in the schools. Copies of the agenda usually are made available to all who attend the board meeting.

CAN AN AGENDA BE TOO RESTRICTIVE?

A well-prepared agenda should provide some flexibility as well as the controls needed. It can provide for the discussion of items not specifically listed, at the same time precluding unlimited "wide-open" discussions.

SOME EXAMPLES OF SCHOOL DISTRICTS' PRACTICES

- *DISTRICT No. 1:* One week prior to each school board meeting the superintendent meets with community representatives, including the media. They are informed of items scheduled for discussion and are given the opportunity to suggest other agenda items.
- *DISTRICT No. 2:* The superintendent and staff prepare "green-sheets" which explain each item to be considered, summarizing the more detailed information provided. This saves board members' time, helps them identify the basic issues and indicates priority for further study.
- *DISTRICT No. 3:* Agenda items resulting in board action related to established policies are keyed for special noting in the minutes and for easy future reference in the district's policy manual. All motions passed are numbered for future reference.
- *DISTRICT No. 4:* Long meetings are shortened and time is spent on more important items by using a "consent agenda". All routine items are assembled into a single item and handled with one motion. Should a member wish to discuss a specific item he/she requests its removal from the "consent agenda" and it is placed on the regular agenda for later discussion.

SUMMARY:

A well-planned agenda helps board members prepare for effective discussions and decisions. It assures that the concerns of board members, staff and patrons will be given appropriate consideration. It helps to make it possible to conduct the meeting in an orderly, efficient and fair manner with a minimum of confusion, misunderstanding, dissension (even disaster) that could result from inadequate preparation. It is an avenue for communicating to the board, staff and patrons important matters to be discussed and actions to be taken. It is an important record – for preparing the minutes, planning future meetings and even for legal purposes. The superintendent usually has the major responsibility for preparing the meeting agenda, but the practice is becoming more widespread to share this responsibility with the board, staff and others.

Consent Agenda

Purpose: More efficient use of school board meeting time

Instructions:

Listed below are typical school board agenda items. Read each one. If you think the item is a good consent agenda item, put an (X) in front of it. Do the same for each item. If you think the item cannot be treated as a consent agenda item, leave it blank.

____ Pay monthly bills

____ Recognizing Dental Health Week

____ Setting tax levy date for February 5 as previously discussed

____ Agree on yearly maintenance plan for district

____ Approval of travel expense for superintendent to attend AASA

____ Appoint principal of new elementary school

____ Awarding of bids to J. B. Construction Company (where policy states bids shall be awarded to the lowest bidder)

____ Approving the Athletic Association dues for the school district for the school year

When the leader gives the signal please share your answers with others at your table.

CONSENT MOTION: "I move to approve the items listed on the consent agenda."

IDEA PAPER 1: MINUTES OF MEETINGS

Minutes are a brief record of the proceedings at a meeting and constitute the official record of the board. They are the main channel of communication from the board to the school personnel and the public. It is required by law that an accurate journal of the proceedings of the board be kept. Minutes are a history of your school; therefore, writing minutes becomes a very personal and interesting job, and it is hoped that these brief instructions will make it more enjoyable.

Preparation for Meetings. The secretary of the meeting should see that a notice of meeting is sent to each member; that the meeting room is arranged ahead of time; that the agenda is prepared; and that all papers pertaining to the meeting are in a folder and all necessary incidentals are at hand. The secretary should sit near the chairman, so that every word can be heard. If unable to hear, the recorder should ask the chairman to have it repeated. Obtaining information beforehand simplifies the taking of minutes. Keep a roll of the board members and check the presence, absence, late arrivals, and early departures. Record the exact time of each.

Types of Meetings. There are regular, special, regular-adjourned and special-adjourned meetings. A special meeting is a meeting not regularly scheduled and is held for a special purpose, but is not an executive session. Adjourned meetings are a regular or special meeting adjourned to meet at a later date on a certain day and hour.

Method of Taking Notes and Recording Minutes. Statutes do not say how records are to be entered or notes taken, whether by handwriting, shorthand, typewriter, or tape recorder. Notes are taken "in depth," but minutes are written in summary.

Preparation of Draft. Write minutes immediately following the meeting while events are still fresh in your mind. If you must write from notes made by another, you must have before you all papers, documents and reports that were discussed at the meeting.

Minutes Should Show:

1. Name of School, City or Town
2. Place of Meeting
3. Day and Hours (Start-Convene)
4. Kind of Meeting (Regular, Special, or Adjourned)

5. Members Present and Absent (Last names can be used. List alphabetically. Some secretaries show names of others attending the meeting--a good practice.)

6. Presiding Officer--President, Chairman pro tem, etc.

7. Business Transacted--General (Record should show what took place and nothing else. Speeches, discussions, etc. should not be recorded unless governing board rules state otherwise. Neither should full texts of reports or communications, except in unusual cases as board directs, be recorded. Lengthy motions are summarized, otherwise record as stated. Meetings must be public and the vote of each member must be publicly cast and recorded.)

8. Adjournment--Usually by motion. (In case of an adjourned meeting, "Move that meeting be adjourned until 9:00 a.m., February 28, 1983.")

Arrangement of Minutes. Arrange the minutes so that important matters: main motions, resolutions, votes (how taken), and decisions, can be instantly discerned. If minutes are long and involved, margin heads, sideheads, or paragraph heads may be used; and important words underlined for emphasis. Minutes may be formal or informal.

Suggested Rules in Typing Minutes

1. Capitalize and center the heading designating the meeting.

2. Indent paragraphs ten spaces.

3. Indent names of those present or absent 15 spaces.

4. Double space between each paragraph and triple space between each item in the order of business.

5. Indent resolutions 15 spaces and single space them.

6. Capitalization of specific boards and officers should be consistent.

7. Leave an inch and a half outside margin, particularly on the left side for binding.

8. Capitalize letters in the words WHEREAS and RESOLVED in resolutions.

9. When sums of money are mentioned in a resolution, write them first in words and then in figures in parentheses.

10. Number each page at the bottom in the center of the page.

Preparing the Minutes in Final Form. Minutes for the minute book should be on special quality paper--no less than 20 lb. rag content bond paper or linen paper for durability--so that both sides of a page can be written upon without "show-through." Never write minutes in the minute book without first writing a draft, if handwritten.

Correcting the Minutes and Inserting the Corrections. No large erasures should appear in the minute book. If minutes are amended or corrected at the meeting at which they are read, the corrections should be put in in red ink, or the amendments should be written on a separate page to be attached. No minutes should be rewritten after they have been read. They should stand as corrected.

Filing Minutes and Keeping Records. Minute books should be kept in a safe place, preferably a fireproof storage. They are your permanent record. Filed reports and documents from the meeting should bear the name of the board, date of the meeting, and signature of the secretary. A good filing system will facilitate locating agenda materials later.

Distribution of Copies of Minutes. The secretary should keep an up-to-date list of persons and their addresses who are to receive copies of the minutes. They should be mailed or delivered as soon as they are written, authorized and printed.

REFERENCES

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Gavin, Ruth E., and Sabin, William A. Reference Manual for Stenographers and Typists. 4th edition. New York: Gregg Division, McGraw-Hill, 1970.

Hutchinson, Lois. Standard Handbook for Secretaries. 8th edition. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1969.

Miller, Besse May. Legal Secretary's Complete Handbook. New Jersey: Prentice-Hill, 1959.

Robert, Henry M., Jr. Robert's Rules of Order. (Revised) Paperback edition. New York: William Morrow & Co., Inc., 1971.

IDEA PAPER 2: (SAMPLE)

SHORELINE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Regular Meeting

VISITOR'S AGENDA*

Welcome to the meeting of the Shoreline Board of Directors. Your visitor's agenda parallels our official agenda. It has been prepared in narrative form so that you may have a better understanding of the topics under consideration. Time has been set aside early in this meeting for you to participate if you desire.

As your elected board, our primary responsibility is to set policies and see that the school district operates within them. This requires study of vast amounts of information. Many agenda items are routine actions required by State law. We try to expedite them as quickly as possible to spend more time on those requiring further clarification and discussion.

We receive the agenda and supporting material on Friday before our Monday meetings. This gives each board member time to request additional information or to discuss upcoming items with the superintendent, staff and citizens. Your input in the way of correspondence or requested agenda items is welcome. To see that you receive a prompt response, please contact the Secretary to the Board, Superintendent William G. Stevenson, no later than Thursday noon preceding our meetings. His offices are here in this building.

Our regular meetings are held the first and third Mondays of each month and begin at 7:30 p.m. (4:30 p.m. during summer vacation). If that particular Monday is a legal holiday, we hold the meeting on the next business day.

Meetings of the committee of the whole are scheduled the second Monday of each month, beginning at 7:30 p.m. At these sessions we hear presentations, ask questions, and discuss issues requiring more time than is available in regular board meetings. When these items come up for action at regular meetings, the Board is then able to act more efficiently, making better use of available time.

All board meetings are open to the public except when we go into an executive session to discuss personnel matters, property acquisitions or sales, and matters of national defense.

We would appreciate your signing the roster so that we may keep a record of attendance. Again--welcome. We hope you will return.

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*Taken from agenda materials supplied by Shoreline School District 412, Seattle, Washington

SCHOOL BOARD AGENDA PRACTICES—A 10-ITEM CHECKLIST

	G	A	NI
Before the Meeting:			
1. Are board agendas developed from information provided by both board members and administrative staff?			
2. Are agendas made available to board members, staff and public at least a few days prior to board meetings?			
3. Are agendas sent to board members accompanied by sufficient background information?			
4. Do board members study agendas, supporting materials, minutes, financial statements, bills, etc., prior to board meetings?			
During the Meeting:			
5. Is the agenda followed as closely as possible with non-agenda items (non-emergency) presented for discussion or listed on agendas for future meetings?			
6. Is the privilege of postponing agenda items for future meetings not abused?			
7. Is the public invited to speak on agenda items before action is taken by the board?			
8. Is the superintendent invited to speak on agenda items and, if appropriate, make recommendations before action is taken by the board?			
9. Has the board adopted or does it follow written procedures for the orderly conduct of business?			
10. Are visitors provided with copies of the agenda?			

RATING MY SCHOOL BOARD MEETING PRACTICES

I would rate our agenda practices as:

☐ good ☐ could be improved

Thoughts, ideas and suggestions I have for improvement are:

_____

_____

_____

_____

Board & Administrative/Staff Roles

EFFECTIVE SCHOOL BOARD MEETINGS

KEYS TO SCHOOL BOARDSMANSHIP

Effective School Board Meetings: BOARD & STAFF ROLES

A True-False Quiz

T/F

In relation to school board meetings:

_____ 1. The board's responsibility is policy making.

_____ 2. The board represents the interests of students and staff as well as voters in general.

_____ 3. The superintendent's roles are organizer, consultant, information source, link with staff and patrons, and implementer of board actions.

_____ 4. Staff members are resource persons.

_____ 5. The board shares the responsibility for communications with citizens, staff and students.

_____ 6. The major purpose of a school board meeting is to conduct business, rather than provide a forum.

_____ 7. Citizen participation in board meetings should be limited but spelled out.

_____ 8. The superintendent can chair a board meeting in the absence of the chairperson.

WHAT IS THE ROLE OF THE BOARD AT MEETINGS?

The only place a board can take any action is at a board meeting. Therefore, the role of the board at board meetings is to conduct the business of the school district. It must perform functions related to: (1) policy; (2) management oversight; (3) school program; and (4) communication with the public and staff.

WHAT IS THE BOARD'S MAIN ROLE?

A major function of a school board has been and continues to be one of enacting policies that govern the district . . . a legislative function. However, roles of boards are changing. Today's board is also involved in executive functions, such as evaluation of the superintendent (mandated by law); judicial functions, such as grievance procedures and hearings. The board of the 80s will likely continue engaging in functions thought earlier to be the exclusive domain of the school administrator.

WHAT IS THE ROLE OF THE CHAIRPERSON AT BOARD MEETINGS?

It is the board president's or chairperson's task to conduct the meeting in a well organized way, following bylaws and rules of order as established by the board. It is essential that the chairperson maintain control at all times, and at the same time provide opportunity for discussion from differing points of view. The chairperson can encourage a positive atmosphere conducive to objective decision making. The chairperson has the responsibility to see that the board does the work at hand, and takes action when needed using time wisely. Recent practices see the chairperson serving as a representative to the management team and working with administrative staff, planning the agendas for board meetings.

WHAT IS THE SUPERINTENDENT'S ROLE IN RELATION TO BOARD MEETINGS?

In most states, the superintendent is designated by law to serve as an officer of the board ("secretary" or other title). Thus the superintendent's responsibilities generally include preparing the agenda and other necessary duties in advance of the meetings, as well as attending the meetings. The superintendent does not conduct or control the meetings, but as the chief administrative officer of the district provides information, counsel

and other supportive assistance. The superintendent also is responsible for providing advance notification and followup reports to the public and for maintaining an accurate record of all proceedings. Where the management team concept is being used, superintendents recognize the need for their leadership in organizing and conducting these meetings. Often board agenda items emerge from these joint discussions with board and staff.

WHAT IS THE ROLE OF OTHER STAFF MEMBERS?

The superintendent may request staff members to provide information and/or to participate at board meetings, particularly those having responsibilities in areas to be discussed. Because staff members are responsible to the superintendent, generally it is appropriate that communications between board and staff be made through the superintendent between meetings. Wher there are exceptions, have a clear understanding ahead of time by all concerned.

WHAT IS THE ROLE OF A PARENT OR OTHER CITIZEN IN RELATION TO SCHOOL BOARD MEETINGS?

Parents and other citizens are legally welcome and need to be made to feel welcome at board meetings (except for executive sessions authorized by law). Anyone desiring that a specific concern be addressed by the board is invited to submit a request to the superintendent in time for inclusion on the agenda. Citizens take part in board discussions when requested but do not participate in decision making procedures of the board. A complete board agenda will include the opportunity for citizens to bring matters to the board's attention. Citizens are welcome to attend all open meetings of the board, since the business being transacted is in the best interest of everyone in the community. Increasing interest and involvement of citizens in school affairs often takes the form of citizen advisory committees. These groups, appointed by the board, serve as study and research arms of the board and augment staff on specific problems. As such, they play an important function at board meetings.

DO THESE ROLES, AS OUTLINED ABOVE, REFLECT STANDARD PRACTICE AMONG SCHOOL DISTRICTS?

No. There is a wide variation in the interpretation of roles, for a number of reasons. These include:

- Domination by the superintendent, reducing the importance and effectiveness of the board.
- Domination by the board or board chairman detracting from the administrative functions of the superintendent and staff.
- Participation by citizens in the board's discussions and decision making rather than providing information, sometimes influencing or even intimidating board members.

WHAT IS THE ROLE OF EMPLOYEE GROUP REPRESENTATIVES AT BOARD MEETINGS?

Union or association leaders are given the same opportunity that is provided to others to suggest items for the board agenda or to bring matters to the board's attention as appropriate, in the form of information presentation only. The board meeting is not intended for debating items from the bargaining table or for airing grievances better handled through orderly, established procedures.

ARE THE CONSEQUENCES PREDICTABLE WHEN ROLES ARE NOT APPROPRIATELY RECOGNIZED?

Yes. Experience shows that when either the superintendent or board tries to dominate or usurp the other's role, a "win-lose" attitude is created, making it difficult to accomplish the district's goals objectively and constructively. An unhealthy competitive situation can develop, with the result that neither the board nor staff members can do their best. Board members feel resentment toward the superintendent and staff, and the morale of the staff deteriorates, a climate that can reach into the entire community. Also, the skills of only one person or group are utilized instead of the skills of all involved.

Uncontrolled participation by parents, union representatives or other citizens likewise can have a damaging effect. Meetings can become disorganized, even chaotic. The board loses the respect of citizens, staff and students, making it difficult to gain needed cooperation and support for actions taken.

WHAT CAN BE DONE TO HELP MAKE SURE THAT ROLES ARE OBSERVED?

It may be advisable for board members and superintendents to reassess their practices in relation to their respective roles and responsibilities. They also might review the roles of other staff, citizen groups, union leaders and others who may be influencing the effectiveness of board meetings. It should be noted that both roles are (1) in a state of transition and (2) changing definitions as they relate to each other. The kind of reflective discussion where roles and processes are examined offers the greatest opportunity for positive growth and more effective meetings.

Following this open and frank reassessment, steps can be taken as appropriate to correct the problems. It is useful to ask:

- Are the bylaws and policies clear and adequate to assure that board meetings are carried out in an efficient and orderly manner? If not, what changes can be made?
- Have there been appropriate communications with staff, public and others regarding roles at board meetings? (A brief printed folder made available to those attending board meetings can help avoid problems and confusion.)

SUMMARY:

In view of increased demands and complexity of the task, school boards need to make every effort to conduct their meetings in as efficient and orderly a manner as possible. This can be best accomplished if all concerned will observe their respective roles – board members, superintendents, staff, citizens and others. A frank and candid reassessment of a board's practices may indicate the need for some changes or at least for more effective communication of the ground rules for effective school board meetings. This may improve the atmosphere at board meetings, decision making procedures and interpersonal communication between board and staff and among board members.

Resources Available

School Board Meetings – NSBA Report #1976-2. A brief review of research relative to decision making, split votes, effective meetings and communication. Also includes sample of a visitor's brochure during meetings and local district bylaws on meeting procedures.

How a School Board Operates. Ben Brodinsky, PDK Fastback 88. A well written 38-page booklet that summarizes conventional school board wisdom.

Citizen Boards at Work – New Challenges to Effective Action. Harleigh B. Trecker. New York: Associated Press, 1970. A practical, experience-based book that treats the work of boards very broadly. Chapters 3 and 4 cover the board, executive and staff.

Education and Public Understanding. Gordon McClaskey, Washington State University. New York: Harper and Row, 1967.

SCHOOL BOARD MEETING ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES: A CHECKLIST EXERCISE

Please wait for the leader to give instructions.

NOTE: R = Has responsibility
A = May assist

As a board you may wish to select those items you find important and agree who should take the responsibility for them.

	Board member	Board chairman	Superintendent	Administrative Staff	Other
PRIOR TO MEETING:					
1. Publish date, time and location of meeting.					
2. Prepare agenda and send to board members prior to meeting (2-3 days).					
3. Prepare supplementary materials to the agenda, explaining issues, concerns and/or recommendations.					
4. Send agenda to school personnel, interested citizens and media.					
5. Read and study board materials.					
6. Secure legal advice, if needed.					
7. Draft written resolutions and motions on technical issues, e.g., call for levy/bond election.					
8. Prepare financial statement and list of bills to be paid.					
9. Prepare minutes of previous meeting.					
10. Arrange meeting room that is neat, attractive, well ventilated and has adequate space for visitors.					
11. Prepare a visitors' agenda and/or brochure giving information about the board and its activities.					
12. Arrange seating appropriately. Include name plates, board policy books, other necessary materials.					

(MORE)

NOTE: R = Has responsibility
A = May assist

	Board member	Board chairman	Superintendent	Administrative Staff	Other
AT THE MEETING:					
13. Start meeting on time.					
14. Project a positive image--open and friendly.					
15. Ensure that mutual respect is shown between board members and superintendent.					
16. Set a businesslike tone for the meeting--helps keep to the agenda.					
17. Welcome citizens. Allow them to speak at appropriate time.					
18. Provide opportunities for members of the teaching and administrative staff to discuss instructional programs.					
19. Establish ground rules and limits for board discussion and citizen involvement at meetings.					
20. Take action only after all sides of an issue have been thoroughly examined.					
21. View divergent opinions as helpful and useful in understanding complex issues and problems.					
22. Hold executive sessions to a minimum and follow state statutes.					
23. Create an atmosphere in which conflicts are not avoided and each person is given a hearing in order that a solution may be found.					
24. Encourage the board to be self-conscious about its own operation and to often examine how it may improve itself.					

(MORE)

NOTE: R = Has responsibility
A = May assist

	Board member	Board chairman	Superintendent	Administrative Staff	Other
AFTER THE MEETING:					
25. Support decisions by the majority of the board.					
26. Communicate board actions regarding staff members as early as possible.					
27. Prepare news releases regarding board actions.					
28. Write complete and accurate minutes.					
29. Initiate follow-up action on board meeting, including delegating responsibility and timelines.					
30. Begin planning for the next board meeting.					

Adapted from materials of the New Jersey School Boards Association.

IDEA PAPER 1

HOW TO BE A SABOTEUR OF THE SCHOOL BOARD
(Or TEN GOOD WAYS OF DOING NOTHING)

It is quite understandable and very human to want to escape dealing with the problem at hand. Sometimes, this is done clumsily causing embarrassment and leaving the board without the comfortable feeling of having disposed of the problem. There are more "sophisticated" techniques for dodging the issue. These are:

1. Find a scapegoat and ride him. Faculty can blame administration, and vice versa; administration can blame the legislature; and we can all blame the social order.

2. Profess not to have the answer. This lets you out of having any answer.

3. For every proposal set up an opposite, and conclude that the "middle ground" (no motion whatever) represents the wisest course of action. If this does not work, say that we must not move too rapidly. This avoids the necessity of getting started.

4. Point out that an attempt to reach a conclusion is only a futile "quest for certainty." Doubt and indecision "promote growth." Should this put you in a tight place, then say something which the group cannot understand.

5. Look slightly embarrassed when the problem is brought up. Hint that it is in bad taste or too elementary for mature consideration, or that any discussion of it is likely to be misinterpreted by outsiders. Should other members persist to discuss the problem, then say that the problem cannot be separated from other problems; therefore, no problem can be solved until all other problems have been solved.

6. Point out that those who see the problem do so by virtue of personality traits, e.g., they are unhappy and transfer their dissatisfaction to the areas under consideration. A good ploy when this fails is to ask what is meant by the question. When it is calculatedly clarified, there will not be time left for the answer.

7. Try to point out all sides of every issue, thereby hiding your own indecisiveness under a blanket of objectivity. This is sure to decrease popularity so, as a safeguard, discover that there are all sorts of "dangers" in any specific formulation of conclusions: dangers of exceeding authority or seeming to, of asserting more than is definitely known, and so on (and, of course, the danger of revealing that no one has a sound conclusion to offer).

8. Should the above fail, insist that you wait until some expert can be consulted.

9. Also, you can always retreat into general objectives on which everyone can agree but which suggest no content and no changes in the present program.

10. As a last resort, give profuse thanks for the problem. "It has stimulated our best thinking and has therefore contributed to our growth." It should get a medal.

RATING MY SCHOOL BOARD MEETING PRACTICES

I would rate our board/administrative staff roles as:

☐ good ☐ could be improved

Thoughts, ideas and suggestions I have for improvement are:

_____

_____

_____

_____

Effective Leadership

EFFECTIVE SCHOOL BOARD MEETINGS

KEYS TO SCHOOL BOARDSMANSHIP

Effective School Board Meetings: LEADERSHIP

A True-False Quiz

T/F

_____ 1. The chairperson has the sole responsibility for leadership during a school board meeting.

_____ 2. The job of chairperson should be rotated at least annually, to give each board member the opportunity to share the honor.

_____ 3. The superintendent, as chief executive officer, should act as co-chairperson.

_____ 4. A well prepared agenda, if followed, always assures a good board meeting.

_____ 5. Procedures for conducting a school board meeting are prescribed by law.

_____ 6. According to Robert's Rules of Order, the chair cannot make a motion and has no vote except in the event of a tie.

_____ 7. The management team (superintendent, board, principals) is an emerging leadership technique.

WHAT IS THE LEADERSHIP ROLE OF THE SCHOOL BOARD?

Publicly elected school board members are the official link between citizens and schools and are recognized as such. Voters elect board members to establish (1) policies, (2) school programs, (3) communication, and (4) to be manager overseers of the school district. Election to board membership indicates that citizens believe members are capable of performing these functions well. That expression of public confidence gives board members a large capacity for educational leadership; voters look to board members for educational advice. Effective board leadership helps people understand schools and tends to unite citizens in support of education; ineffective leadership may result in public apathy, misunderstandings or dissension which damage schools.

WHAT LEADERSHIP ROLES DO MEMBERS HAVE WITHIN THE BOARD?

Recent concepts of leadership see all members performing functions of leadership during meetings. For example:

1. The meeting is "owned" by the members, including the leader. All members contribute to its effectiveness.
2. The group is responsible for reaching decisions that include participation of all and are the product of all.
3. Members take responsibility for its productivity, its methods of working, its assignments of tasks, and its use of time available.
4. Members recognize feelings, emotions and conflict as legitimate facts and situations requiring attention of everyone.
5. Members realize that problems within a group must be faced and solved within the group and by the group.
6. Members recognize the needs, feelings and purposes of all members so that the board becomes a group and continues to grow.

WHAT IS THE LEADERSHIP ROLE OF THE BOARD PRESIDENT/CHAIRPERSON?

Leader behavior can range from almost complete control of decision making by the chairperson to almost complete control by the board, with the chairperson contributing his/her resources just like any other board member. A chairperson can assume most of the functions required to provide leadership for the board; or these functions can become the responsibility of the members as well.

Recent research sees group-centered leaders being concerned with:

1. Leadership as a shared function – not just what the leader does. Leadership happens when tasks are accomplished, internal group problems are resolved and the members work together effectively as a group.
2. Leadership involves active listening – the leader listens actively to discussions to determine when specific functions are required; e.g., summarizing, clarifying, focusing, preventing too rapid closure of discussion, watches for nonverbal cues that may indicate hidden agendas and may bring them to the attention of the group – and more!
3. Leadership is working toward the building of a mature, productive group. The leader observes withdrawal of some members or difficulty in arriving at a decision, or overparticipation by a few, sees that interpersonal problems are brought out in the open and resolved and helps various members improve their membership ability.
4. Leadership is service and assistance to the board. This includes helping to develop a climate of trust, enabling members to express freely their feelings, reactions, or possible troubles within the group without fear of reprisal. It also includes helping members see how they can help the board accomplish its task. In short, a leader may serve as facilitator, consultant, adviser, teacher, observer or participant.
5. Leadership involves attention to feelings and emotions, individual purposes and hidden agendas, likings and dislikings, competitions and conflicts, reactions to the agenda issue, feelings about the leader, moods of the board, pressures from outside groups – and more! Agenda items frequently cannot be resolved until the emotional climate within the group surfaces and is worked through. Effective leaders know this!
6. Leadership sees the board as a group – not merely a collection of individuals. The leader sees the members as a total group and realizes that group morale or feelings of satisfaction can have a profound effect on the trend of discussion and the adequacy of the decision or solution reached.

HOW DOES THE BOARD EXERCISE ITS LEADERSHIP?

- *In the school system*, the board provides leadership through enacting fair, workable and well thought out policies . . . by authorizing instructional programs to meet students' needs . . . through careful short range and long range planning . . . by listening to the community and representing its views . . . by hiring competent and capable personnel . . . through effective evaluation, and through actions aimed toward continued improvement.

- *In the community*, board members take the initiative to help people become informed about the school's accomplishments, problems and needs, demonstrating in contacts with individuals and organizations the knowledge, concern and fair mindedness that will help to foster understanding and support. The board is the community's representative in the school process.

HOW DOES THE CHAIRPERSON EXERT LEADERSHIP?

Though every board member shares in the leadership function of the board, the chairperson's role is key. An effective chairperson:

- keeps the meeting moving in an orderly fashion
- recognizes members to be heard in a fair and impartial manner
- insists that both sides of a question be heard
- keeps the attention of the board on one matter at a time
- asks visitors to address the board regarding the business at hand or their own concerns
- knows the basics of parliamentary procedures and refers to rules of order when necessary

SUMMARY:

The leadership skill of a school board can determine whether the board meeting is "the dullest show in town," a series of long and bitter arguments which may have little to do with schooling, or an interesting, informative demonstration of motivated persons working in a positive way to fulfill the responsibilities they share. Effective leadership provides for the community an open window to the educational program, encourages public support and inspires staff and students to do their best.

Resources Available

Quick Guide and Reference to Parliamentary Procedures. Roberts. A standard reference.

Sturgis' Standard Code of Parliamentary Procedure (2nd edition). A simplified version – easy to use.

Citizen Boards at Work – New Challenges to Effective Action. Harleigh B. Trecker. New York: Associated Press, 1970. A practical, experience-based book that treats the work of boards very broadly.

Education and Public Understanding. Gordon McCloskey. New York: Harper and Row, 1967. A college textbook containing unusual common sense!

Making Meetings Work – A Guide for Leaders and Group Leaders. Leland P. Bradford, University Associates, 1976. A practical handbook containing many examples for leaders of groups.

TYPES OF SCHOOL DISTRICT LEADERSHIP

Model I	Model II	Model III	Model IV	Model V
Superintendent assumes full responsibility and authority Military-like decisions are made and expected to be implemented What others think or feel may or may not be a concern Little participation in decision process Example: "We will be hiring Jack Yates as principal and he starts July 1."	Superintendent presents tentative decision, allows some influence Problem(s) already identified and diagnosed by superintendent Some reactions and opinions are sought Example: "I feel we should go ahead with the building program, any reactions?"	Problem(s) largely defined by superintendent Ideas are presented and questions encouraged Opportunity is given to explore assumptions and rationale to gain understanding Example: "I'm leaning toward adopting the new science textbook. Have you had time to review it?"	A team concept emerges and increases its role and influence in the decision process The team has opportunity to develop some solutions Knowledge/expertise of group members is used to discuss problem Example: "Some parents are complaining about the open campus rules for students. Have you heard them? What should we do about them as a faculty?"	A management team becomes a working group All members participate in identifying, diagnosing, developing alternatives and deciding Each person is viewed as having necessary competence and experience Superintendent serves as a coordinator/facilitator Superintendent serves as a valuable information resource to the team Superintendent/board delegates a formal authority role to the team and is committed to implement what the team decides

HOW IT IS NOW:

HOW I'D LIKE IT TO BE:

WHAT DOES IT TAKE TO BE CHAIRMAN OF YOUR BOARD?

How much do you know about what it takes to be an effective chairman of your school board? Here, adapted from many sources (including veteran school board members), is a quiz to sharpen your knowledge of board chairman responsibilities.

1. The most important responsibility of a school board chairman is:

   a. To preside at all meetings of the board
   b. To act as the board's official representative to the press
   c. To prepare meeting agendas
   d. To provide leadership in fulfillment of the board's policy making function

2. The authority of a school board chairman is:

   a. About the same as any other board member
   b. Whatever, if anything, state law and/or board policy says it is
   c. Greater than that of any other board member
   d. Roughly the same as that of a college chairman

3. The most important qualification for school board chairman is:

   a. Good will, gray matter and guts
   b. A good working knowledge of parliamentary procedure
   c. Ability to bring out the best qualities in people
   d. All of the above

4. All official contacts between school board and staff should be:

   a. Handled by the school board chairman
   b. Left to the superintendent and only the superintendent
   c. Outlined in board policy and adhered to
   d. A matter of common sense

5. Community criticism of the schools should be:

   a. Answered by the school board chairman
   b. Handled with common sense and within established board policy
   c. Refuted by each board member every chance he or she gets
   d. Answered by the school board chairman, but only after the matter has been discussed by the entire board

6. The board chairman should:

   a. Visit each school in the district at least once per month
   b. Visit schools in the district on a more or less regular basis
   c. Never visit schools or classrooms in the district
   d. Visit schools in the district on a regular basis, taking care to save his or her comments for appropriate airing with the superintendent and the rest of the board

7. To avoid "washing our dirty linen in public" the board chairman should:

   a. Call an executive session whenever a controversial issue appears to be splitting the board
   b. Determine, before the meeting, how each board member will vote, and stifle minority discussion before it gets started
   c. Not be afraid of what appears on the clothesline so long as board deliberation is carried on openly and honestly
   d. Cut off debate when things get too hot to handle

8. The chairman should allow members of the public to speak at any time during a school board meeting.

   a. Always true
   b. Only if each citizen gives his or her name and address before speaking
   c. It depends upon rules agreed to by the board for the occasion
   d. Always false

9. The board chairman should meet from time to time with teacher committees to discuss grievances.

   a. Yes, without question
   b. No, never
   c. Yes, but only if the teacher contract demands it
   d. Yes, only if the superintendent is present and the rest of the board sanctions the meeting

10. The board chairman should meet from time to time with individual board members to explain what he or she wants done and to support it.

    a. Yes, flatly
    b. No, flatly
    c. Yes, but only if the superintendent is present
    d. Maybe. This sometimes is how strong leaders get things done

11. The board chairman should serve as a confidant--an informal sounding board--for the superintendent as he/she grapples with problems that confront the district.

    a. Not as a rule. It looks like they are in "cahoots" to run the district
    b. Yes, but the chairman must remain discrete in this role
    c. No, never
    d. Always

12. After the board has made a decision that requires administrative actions, the chairman personally should determine whether or not the administration has done what the board directed.

    a. Absolutely
    b. It depends--evaluation procedures should be built into board actions and should be followed
    c. No, never
    d. Only if the chairman can do it without appearing to be meddling in administrative affairs

13. In some states, the school board chairman is required by law to:

    a. "Sign all warrants for payment by the custodian of school monies"
    b. "Sign notices for money needed for outhouses or water closets"
    c. Both of the above
    d. Neither of the above

14. The school board chairman may, in emergency or between regular meetings of the board, approve suspension by the superintendent of any assistant superintendent, principal or teacher.

    a. True
    b. False
    c. It depends upon what the law says in your state

15. As chairman of your board you are visiting a school building and you trip over a loose tile and painfully sprain your ankle. Furious, you hobble to the principal's office and shout, "Hey! You better get somebody to fix that tile right away!"

    a. You acted understandably, and correctly as well
    b. You made a fool of yourself
    c. You exceeded your authority
    d. You should have seen a doctor instead of the principal because sprained ankles should not be ignored

16. Before leaving on a three-week vacation, the superintendent asks you to "keep track of things for me while I'm gone--look in on the new principal now and then to be sure she's keeping out of trouble." You:

a. Tell the superintendent to delegate administrative responsibilities to other administrative associates
b. Tell the superintendent you also plan to be away on vacation for the next three weeks
c. Tell the superintendent you'll be glad to do so
d. Same as "A" but with a short lecture about mixing up policy making and administrative functions

17. Each member of the school board (even those who usually don't speak up) should be allowed to speak on any individual issue under debate. The chairman may refuse to call upon other board members for second comments until each member has had a chance to speak at least once.

a. True
b. It depends on how difficult it is to get closed-mouth board members to say something
c. Only if the chairman is sure that the quiet members have something worthwhile to way
d. False

RATING MY SCHOOL BOARD MEETING PRACTICES

I would rate our school board meeting leadership as:

☐ good ☐ could be improved

Thoughts, ideas and suggestions I have for improvement are:

_____

_____

_____

_____

Decision Making

EFFECTIVE SCHOOL BOARD MEETINGS

KEYS TO SCHOOL BOARDSMANSHIP

Effective School Board Meetings: DECISION MAKING

A True-False Quiz

T/F

_____ 1. The community image of a school board is often based on its decision making ability.

_____ 2. Majority vote is always the best way to reach a board decision.

_____ 3. The quality of a decision can be improved by first using a problem solving approach.

_____ 4. Participative decision making can result in greater productivity and efficiency of board members.

_____ 5. Decision making involves selecting what appears to be the best way of attaining a given objective, based on the best information available.

_____ 6. Different styles of decision making may be advisable as situations change.

_____ 7. A board member should not try to influence other board members' decisions.

HOW DO SCHOOL BOARDS VARY IN THEIR DECISION MAKING PRACTICES?

There is a wide variety of decision making styles among school boards. One researcher* identified at least four types:

1. *Discussion-centered method* (group consensus). Board members engage in extensive discussion, frequently change their minds during discussion, don't develop "sides," usually have unanimous voting records. The superintendent is used as a source of theory, information and research. Roles between board and administration are well understood.
2. *Vote-centered method.* Boards arrive at a decision simply by taking a vote – majority wins. Roles of board and staff are not well defined. Factions develop within the board, though not always the same alignment. Split votes are frequent. Sometimes board elections change the balance and a new majority emerges – often resulting in a change of superintendent as well as chairperson.
3. *Power-figure domination.* Boards arrive at decisions by listening to one power figure member . . . not the superintendent. These boards usually vote unanimously and always do so on issues of importance. Lengthy tenure is gained by playing "follow the leader." The superintendent has far less influence over the board than with other types of boards.
4. *Superintendent-dominated.* Boards "sanction" what the superintendent recommends. The superintendent is the power figure. The superintendent raises questions and suggests procedures to follow and the board most often votes unanimously, with little discussion. The board respects the superintendent, who settles any real issues prior to a board meeting.

Combined styles. Obviously, different combinations and variations of these four styles are also found among school boards.

WHAT ARE DIFFERENT DECISION MAKING STYLES?

A. *Unanimity.* All agree on a given question.

B. *Consensus.* All agree to support the majority vote decision, whether or not it was the first choice of each; all have an opportunity to influence the decision; all clearly understand the decision and can interpret it to others.

C. *Majority vote.* More than half the members vote a given way, but there is no agreed upon commitment by the minority.

*Adapted from Sproule, J. *Decision Making Processes of Boards of Education* New York: Cornell University, 1966.

D. *Minority support.* A minority agree with agreement or lack of open disagreement by the remaining members.
E. *Authority.* One person initiates action, no one else actively disagrees.
F. *Plop.* One person initiates action, but the board does not respond one way or another, no action is taken.

WHAT ARE THE ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF EACH STYLE?

A. Unanimity
Advantages: Everyone supports the decision without reservation, precluding the possibility of future conflict.
Disadvantages: Achieving unanimity is very difficult and time consuming. In many instances it may not be worth the effort to attempt to achieve a unanimous vote or may not be possible where an absolute value conflict exists.

B. Consensus
Advantages: It allows all voices to be heard, all information to be shared and feelings to be expressed. It serves as a safety valve to relieve frustrations. Members are more likely to view the decision as a fair one, and thus are willing to support it, since they have heard everyone's information. There is a group decision to at least not sabotage, and hopefully, to support the decision.
Disadvantages: It is more time consuming and could uncover pain and conflicts in the process. It requires skill to be used successfully, so that all parties are heard.

C. Majority vote
Advantages: It is the fastest method and easiest to use because it follows familiar parliamentary procedure. It is outwardly relatively "painless."
Disadvantages: It sets up a "win-lose" situation that may disregard the feelings of others. Resentment and hurt feelings may not be apparent because they do not surface. This may result in ill-will, lack of commitment, grumbling and even sabotage of the majority's wishes.

D. Minority
Advantages: Ownership of decision rests in the hands of a small faction of the board which is an improvement over one person making the decision.
Disadvantages: The majority, without a stake in the decision, may sabotage the decision or drop out of further participation.

E. Authority
Advantages: Very efficient in time and level of participation.
Disadvantages: Ownership of decision rests primarily with the person deciding. Commitment of others to the decision may be low or nonexistent.

F. Plop
Advantages: Instantaneous decision making, no comments required.
Disadvantages: No group participation. If ideas are repeatedly passed over without notice, frustrations rise and participants withhold further contributions.

WHEN IS EACH STYLE MOST APPROPRIATE?

Unanimity may be advisable for major personnel decisions or other crucial issues, such as a bond election that could be jeopardized by one or two board members' "no" votes.
Consensus is the safest method when nonsupport or sabotage could damage the cause; it is especially important when the board is dealing with emotionally charged issues.
Majority vote speeds decision making when routine matters are addressed; it is useful when an individual's values or emotions are not at stake.
Minority, authority and plop styles of decision making are rarely, if ever, used by effective school boards.

ARE "SPLIT VOTE" DECISIONS UNDESIRABLE?

Interesting research findings from California indicate that "split votes":
- found the same board members voting together one-third of the time while another one-third of the time different board members were aligned together
- did not seem to change "esprit de corps" among board members
- did not follow political lines but issues
- are not viewed as undesirable in the judgment of most superintendents

WHAT WAYS MIGHT BE USED TO IMPROVE DECISION MAKING?

There are a number of problem solving techniques that, when used, form the foundation for effective decision making processes. While problem solving and decision making processes are different, they are closely related and support each other. When an effective problem solving technique has been used, the issue or problem is clearly understood, which enables appropriate decision making styles to be applied. One successful problem solving technique involves these steps:

1. Project the problem or issue into the future one, two or five years. Describe what things would be like if the problem was resolved and everything was working smoothly. "Who would be doing what to whom under what conditions?"
2. Now that the "ideal" future has been described, determine what the obstacles or barriers are at present that prevent the realization of this "ideal" situation.
3. Examine each obstacle or barrier to determine which one(s) are highest priority and lend themselves to resolution.
4. Brainstorm possible activities that will help eliminate these barriers, again selecting those which seem most reasonable and workable.
5. Develop a plan of action for the selected activities, including a timeline when they will be implemented and completed.
6. To determine whether or not your plan is working, determine some "signs of success" that will show you that the plan is successful.
7. Implement the action plan and monitor the results periodically, using the "signs of success" to determine degree of success.

WHAT ARE THE CRITERIA FOR EFFECTIVE DECISION MAKING?

Research findings suggest that board members will be more effective when:

- The leadership provides opportunity for all to participate
- Communication is encouraged; everyone's information is available to all
- A cooperative problem solving approach is used
- The members are open and candid with one another
- The responsibility for decision making is shared, rather than centered with one person or a small coalition
- Decide what style of decision making is appropriate to issues under consideration

WHAT ARE THE OUTCOMES OF EFFECTIVE DECISION MAKING PRACTICES?

The decisions reached are more likely to:

- Be sensible and workable
- Take into account the facts as well as the feelings of those concerned
- Have few negative results

SUMMARY:

There are no fixed rules about how decisions must be made, but it is helpful for board members to *decide how to decide*. Different approaches may be appropriate in different situations. An understanding of the factors involved can result in more positive and constructive efforts among board members, better understanding and better decisions.

Resources Available

School Board Meetings – NSBA Report #1976-2. A brief review of research related to decision making, split votes and effective meeting practices.

A Guide to Effective Problem Solving. Paul C. Buchanan. Leadership Resources, Inc., 1977.

Making Change – A Guide to Effectiveness In Groups. Eileen Guthrie and Warren Sam Miller. Minneapolis, Minnesota, 1978.

Citizen Boards at Work – New Challenges to Effective Action. Harleigh B. Trecker. New York: Associated Press, 1970.

A PROCESS FOR DECISION MAKING

NOTE: Wait for instructions from the leader.

_____ A. List possible outcomes of each alternative (the results of actions you might take).

_____ B. List all possible alternatives (actions you can take).

_____ C. Clearly state the decision to be made (know what you want).

_____ D. Rank each alternative.

_____ E. Consider the probability of each outcome (what is the chance of a result occurring?).

_____ F. Consider the desirability of each outcome (how valuable? is it what you want to happen?).

_____ G. Gather pertinent information (what do you want to know about the alternatives?).

_____ H. List the risks associated with each outcome (compromise between probability and desirability).

PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE QUIZ FOR SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS

Circle "T" if the statement is true, and "F" if the statement is false.

T F 1. A board chairman only votes in case of a tie.

T F 2. All motions require a second.

T F 3. At a meeting with four members present, a motion is made and seconded. The vote is two-to-two. The motion is defeated.

T F 4. A motion to table is made to kill a motion.

T F 5. On important questions before the board, you may not limit the length of discussion on a motion.

T F 6. Explanations are always necessary when the chairman rules a motion out of order.

T F 7. The board chairman does not enter into debate unless the chairman yields the chair to the vice chairman.

T F 8. An agenda item may be postponed to the next meeting for action.

T F 9. Unanimous vote is the same as consensus.

T F 10. A motion to adjourn need not wait until the agenda has been completed.

Quick Reference and Guide to Parliamentary Procedures

	ORDER OF MOTIONS	MAY APPLY TO FOLLOWING MOTIONS	May Interrupt One Who Has Floor	Mover Must Be Recognized	REQUIRES A SECOND	DEBATABLE	VOTE REQUIRED	MAY BE RENEWED	MOTIONS THAT MAY APPLY TO IT
PRIVILEGED MOTIONS	1 TO FIX TIME OF NEXT MEETING	None	No	Yes	Yes	Not when privileged	Majority	Not for same time	Amend, Reconsider
	2 TO ADJOURN	None	No	Yes	Yes	Not when privileged	Majority	Yes, after progress	None
	3 QUESTION OF PRIVILEGE	None	Yes, if Necessary	No	No	No, but a resulting motion is	Decided by chair	After progress	None apply to question of privilege but all may apply to resulting privileged motion
	4 TO CALL FOR ORDERS OF THE DAY	Any special or general order	Yes, to call for a special order	No	No	No	None takes 2/3 vote to postpone special order	Yes, except special cases	None except to postpone orders
INCIDENTAL MOTIONS	5 RISE TO A POINT OF ORDER	Any motion or act	Yes	No	No	No	None unless appealed, then majority	No	None
	6 APPEAL	Any decision by the chair	Yes	No	Yes	No	Majority	No	Lay on table, close debate, reconsider
	7 TO SUSPEND THE RULES	Any motion where needed	No	Yes	Yes	No	Usually 2/3 (see Constitution)	No, except by unanimous consent	None
	8 TO CREATE SPECIAL ORDERS	Main motion	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	2/3	After progress	All
	9 TO WITHDRAW (or renew) A MOTION	Any motion	No	Yes	No	No	Majority	After progress	Reconsider
	10 VOTING – "Division" Motion To Ballot	Any		No	Division, no; Ballot, yes	No	Majority	Does not apply	None
	11 OBJECTION TO CONSIDERATION	Main question and questions of privilege	Yes	No	No	No	2/3 in negative	No	Reconsider
SUBSIDIARY MOTIONS	12A TO LAY ON THE TABLE	Main question, appeals, questions of privilege or reconsider	No	Yes	Yes	No	Majority	After progress	None
	12B TO TAKE FROM THE TABLE	Only to motion that was tabled	No	Yes	Yes	No	Majority	After progress	None
	13 CLOSE DEBATE	Any debatable motion	No	Yes	Yes	No	2/3 Majority	After progress	Reconsider
	14 TO POSTPONE TO CERTAIN DAY	Main motion, questions of privilege or reconsider	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority	After progress	Amend, reconsider, limit or close debate
	15 TO REFER	Main motion, questions of privilege	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority	After progress	Amend, reconsider limit or close debate
	16 TO AMEND OR SUBSTITUTE	Main motion, limit debate, refer, postpone definitely, fix time of next meeting	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority	No	Amend, reconsider, limit or close debate
	17 TO POSTPONE INDEFINITELY	Main motion, questions of privilege	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority	No	Limit or close debate, reconsider ("I" vote only)
	18 MAIN QUESTION (or motion)	No other motion	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority	Not at same session	All
	19 TO RECONSIDER	Any motion except adjourn, suspend rules, lay on table	Yes, for entry	No	Yes	Yes	Majority	No	Limit or close debate, lay on table, postpone definitely
	20 TO RESCIND	Main motions, appeals, questions of privilege	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority	Not at same session	All
	21 ELECTIONS (Nominations)	None	No	Yes	No	No			None

WHAT CONSENSUS MEANS

Consensus Means That:

- All participants contribute. Everyone's opinions are used and encouraged. Differences are viewed as helpful rather than hindering.
- Everyone can paraphrase the issue.
- Everyone has a chance to express feelings about the issue.
- Those members who continue to disagree indicate that they are willing to experiment for a prescribed period of time.
- All members share in the final decision.

Consensus Does Not Mean That:

- A vote is unanimous.
- The result is everyone's first choice.
- Everyone agrees (only that there is enough support for the decision to be carried out).
- Conflict or resistance will be overcome immediately.

Not all decisions should be made by consensus. The most important point is that everyone agrees on how decisions are to be made.

IDEA PAPER 1: DECISION BY CONSENSUS*

Techniques to Facilitate Consensus

It is possible to build relationships among the members of a face-to-face group so that decisions can be made effectively by consensus. More effective groups tend to have leaders who allow greater participation, wider initial divergence of expressed judgments, and greater acceptance of diverse decisions (see Torrance, 1975). Moreover, effective leaders have been shown to encourage minority opinions and conflict to a greater extent than less effective leaders (see Maier and Solem, 1952). Coch and French (1948) have also shown that group participants with little influence over a decision not only fail to contribute their resources to a decision but usually are less likely to carry out the decision when action is required.

Stimulation of Minority

In consensual decision making, special care must be taken to uncover minority views that may not easily come to the surface. This can be done by tactfully inviting silent members to express their views. To elicit responses from others effectively, group members can use paraphrasing, summarizing, and checking the feelings of others. Sometimes, someone not in the minority can be asked to assume the role of the minority and to express his view to the rest of the group; some members of the minority may then care to say whether the role-taker's expression was accurate.

Taking a Survey

An essential technique for obtaining consensus is the survey. The full use of this technique involves the following steps. First, someone presents the issue clearly. Then, one or two others clarify it by restating it. Following that, everyone in turn states his reactions to the proposal.

Each person should be as brief as possible while still being clear, but he need not restrict himself to yes or no. He may say that he is uncertain, that he is confused and wants to hear more, that he is experiencing some pain, or he can simply say that he does not wish to talk about it. A group using the survey should not allow an individual to remain completely silent. If someone does not want to speak, he must at least say explicitly he wants to say nothing. This assures the group of bringing up to date its knowledge of every member's point of view on the question and of doing so through explicit statements, not presumptions.

* Richard A. Schmuck and Philip J. Runkel. Handbook of Organizational Development in Schools. National Press Books, 1972.

Instructions for Consensus

Consensus is a decision process of making full use of available resources and for resolving conflicts creatively. Consensus is difficult to reach, so not every ranking will meet with everyone's complete approval. Complete unanimity is not the goal—it is rarely achieved. But each individual should be able to accept the group rankings on the basis of logic and feasibility. When all group members feel this way, you have reached consensus as defined here, and the judgment may be entered as a group decision. This means, in effect, that a single person can block the group if he thinks it necessary; at the same time, he should use this option in the best sense of reciprocity. Here are some guidelines to use in achieving consensus:

1. Avoid arguing for your own rankings. Present your position as lucidly and logically as possible, but listen to the other members' reactions and consider them carefully before you press your point.

2. Do not assume that someone must win and someone must lose when discussion reaches a stalemate. Instead, look for the next-most-acceptable alternative for all parties.

3. Do not change your mind simply to avoid conflict and to reach agreement and harmony. When agreement seems to come too quickly and easily, be suspicious. Explore the reasons and be sure everyone accepts the solution for basically similar or complementary reasons. Yield only to positions that have objective and logically sound foundations.

4. Avoid conflict-reducing techniques such as majority vote, averages, coin-flips and bargaining. When a dissenting member finally agrees, don't feel that he must be rewarded by having his own way on some later point.

5. Differences of opinion are natural and expected. Seek them out and try to involve everyone in the decision process. Disagreements can help the group's decision because with a wide range of information and opinions, there is a greater chance that the group will hit upon more adequate solutions.

RATING MY SCHOOL BOARD MEETING PRACTICES

I would rate our school board decision making as:

☐ good ☐ could be improved

Thoughts, ideas and suggestions I have for improvement are:

_____

_____

_____

_____

Communication

EFFECTIVE SCHOOL BOARD MEETINGS

KEYS TO SCHOOL BOARDSMANSHIP

Effective School Board Meetings: COMMUNICATION

A True-False Quiz

T/F

_____ 1. **Communication impedes progress at board meetings.**

_____ 2. **If a person doesn't speak, no communication is taking place.**

_____ 3. **When someone is speaking, the listener should be thinking of a response, to save time.**

_____ 4. **Nothing can be done about a person who talks too much.**

_____ 5. **Open meeting laws prevent good communication at school board meetings.**

_____ 6. **It is not practical to try to get board members' agreement on how controversial issues will be handled.**

WHAT DOES GOOD COMMUNICATION INCLUDE?

Sound communication is the foundation for conducting school affairs. In its most elementary form, good communication takes place when *one person sends a clear message* and *another person receives and understands it.* Reading, writing, speaking and listening – prior to, during and following the school board meeting – all contribute to the effectiveness of school boards. Communication at the meeting includes speaking, listening, reading and responding (orally or nonverbally). Messages clearly presented and understood will significantly enhance the quality of school board meetings.

WHAT SKILLS IMPROVE COMMUNICATION?

Basic interpersonal communication skills include:

a. Expressing information and ideas clearly and concisely: Being definite, dealing in specifics and giving examples.
b. Expressing feelings: Letting others know when you like or dislike something, when you're disturbed, hurt or put down, and when you do not understand something that was said.
c. Listening and understanding information, ideas and suggestions of others: Listening rather than preparing your next remark, checking your understanding before agreeing or disagreeing, summarizing, and asking questions.
d. Understanding and responding to others' feelings: Checking out how others are feeling, not ignoring feelings when angry or hurt, and surveying the group to find agreement.
e. Other skills include: Talking in group discussions, asking for feedback, becoming more aware of your own feelings and how they affect your responses, recognizing conflict and tension and dealing positively with them.

WHAT IS NONVERBAL COMMUNICATION?

There is more involved than the words we write, read, speak or hear, There is nonverbal communication as well, for example: gestures, facial expression (a smile or a sneer), and other body language. One's eyes can imply interest, acceptance, support, rejection or even hostility. There is a message even in one's posture (courtesy . . . enthusiasm . . . boredom). One critical aspect is the degree to which our verbal and nonverbal messages transmit the same meaning.

WHAT IS THE COMMUNICATION ROLE OF THE BOARD AT MEETINGS?

It is so simple to say yet so difficult to do – express your thoughts and ideas clearly to each other and to staff and/or visitors; be active listeners trying to understand what others say before responding; be sensitive to your own feelings

and others on issues under discussion; use humor to break tension when appropriate; deal openly and honestly with differences of opinion; feel free to ask questions and seek new information; and others you could list.

WHAT IS THE COMMUNICATION ROLE OF THE CHAIRPERSON?

The effective chairperson provides the atmosphere for good communication. This includes beginning and ending meetings on time, moving efficiently through the agenda, using parliamentary procedures as helpful tools, and providing opportunity for appropriate input from all those involved.

WHAT IS THE COMMUNICATION ROLE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT?

The communication skill of the superintendent is a key factor in the effectiveness of the board. Like board members the superintendent's role is a flexible one – varying according to the need and also changing. Behaviors may range from facilitative to dominant. The major goal of the superintendent at board meetings is to make communications effective among and between board members, the staff and the public.

WHAT ARE SOME WAYS TO IMPROVE COMMUNICATIONS RELATIVE TO BOARD MEETINGS?

Prior to the meeting there should be:

- Adequate advance notice (to public, staff, media)
- A well-prepared agenda
- Clear and adequate background information and support materials, information from all involved
- Advance preparation by the chairperson

During:

- Appropriate meeting room (business-like, comfortable but not too formal; proper lighting, temperature, ventilation, acoustics, seating, etc.)
- Agendas and other information for those attending
- Board members practice being "active" listeners
- Name plates identifying board members
- Recognition of the appropriate roles of the chairperson, individual board members, superintendent, audience
- Initially establish periodical review – group agreements on how the board deals with controversial issues, dominance of meeting by individuals, maintaining open communication with staff and public
- Provisions for accurate recordkeeping
- Adherence to the agenda
- Recognition of the need for two-way communication
- Occasionally evaluate how well board meetings are going
- Observance for all of common courtesies (chairperson, board members, superintendent, staff, audience)
- Facilitating behavior on the part of the chairperson and by group members: listening without interrupting, summarizing, asking questions, making sure information is both clearly put out and clearly heard, eliciting additional information that is signalled by body language

After:

- Send summary reports promptly to staff, news media and others concerned.
- Prepare and duplicate minutes.
- Provide appropriate followup information to board, staff and others when needed relative to items discussed, including plans for implementing board's actions.

SUMMARY:

Interpersonal communication, both verbal and nonverbal, is the key factor in effective board meetings. Sound communication practices produce trust and understanding – so essential to good decision making, staff morale and community support.

HOW GOOD A LISTENER ARE YOU?

Attitudes	Almost Always	Usually	Occasionally	Seldom	Almost Never
1. Do you like to listen to other people talk?	5	4	3	2	1
2. Do you encourage other people to talk?	5	4	3	2	1
3. Do you listen even if you do not like the person who is talking?	5	4	3	2	1
4. Do you listen equally well whether the person talking is man or woman, young or old?	5	4	3	2	1
5. Do you listen equally well to friend, acquaintance, stranger?	5	4	3	2	1
Actions					
6. Do you put what you have been doing out of sight and out of mind?	5	4	3	2	1
7. Do you look at him/her?	5	4	3	2	1
8. Do you ignore the distractions about you?	5	4	3	2	1
9. Do you smile, nod your head, and otherwise encourage him/her to talk?	5	4	3	2	1
10. Do you think about what s/he is saying?	5	4	3	2	1
11. Do you try to figure out what s/he means?	5	4	3	2	1
12. Do you try to figure out why s/he is saying it?	5	4	3	2	1
13. Do you let him/her finish what s/he is trying to say?	5	4	3	2	1
14. If s/he hesitates, do you encourage him/her to go on?	5	4	3	2	1
15. Do you re-state what has been said and ask him/her if you got it right?	5	4	3	2	1
16. Do you withhold judgment about the idea until s/he has finished?	5	4	3	2	1
17. Do you listen regardless of his/her manner of speaking and choice of words?	5	4	3	2	1
18. Do you listen even though you anticipate what s/he is going to say?	5	4	3	2	1
19. Do you question him/her in order to get a full explanation?	5	4	3	2	1
20. Do you ask what the words mean as s/he uses them?	5	4	3	2	1

TOTAL SCORE _____

(Adapted from United Learning Institute Inc. workshop materials, 1978.)

IMPROVING SKILLS IN FACE-TO-FACE COMMUNICATION

	Need to do it LESS	Doing all right	Need to do it MORE	
Expressing information, ideas, suggestions				
1. Being brief and concise--getting to the point	____	____	____	1
2. Being forceful and definite rather than hesitant and apologetic	____	____	____	2
3. Talking in specifics--giving examples, details	____	____	____	3
4. Talking in generalizations, principles, explanations	____	____	____	4
5. _____	____	____	____	5
6. _____	____	____	____	6
Expressing Feelings				
7. Letting others know when I do not understand something they have said	____	____	____	7
8. Letting others know when I like something they have said or done	____	____	____	8
9. Letting others know when I disagree with them	____	____	____	9
10. Letting others know when I think they have changed the subject or become irrelevant	____	____	____	10
11. Letting others know when I am getting irritated	____	____	____	11
12. Letting others know when I feel hurt, embarrassed or put down by something they have said or done	____	____	____	12
13. _____	____	____	____	13
14. _____	____	____	____	14

Understanding information, ideas and suggestions of others	Need to do it LESS	Doing all right	Need to do it MORE	
15. Listening to understand rather than preparing my next remark	____	____	____	15
16. Helping others participate in the discussion	____	____	____	16
17. Before agreeing or disagreeing, checking to make sure I do understand what others mean	____	____	____	17
18. Summarizing points of disagreement and agreement	____	____	____	18
19. Asking questions in ways that get more information than "yes" or "no"	____	____	____	19
20. _____	____	____	____	20
21. _____	____	____	____	21
Understanding and responding to others' feelings				
22. Checking out with others what I think they are feeling rather than assuming I know	____	____	____	22
23. Responding to a person who is angry with me in such a way that I do not ignore his feelings	____	____	____	23
24. Responding to a person whose feelings are hurt in such a way that I do not ignore his feelings	____	____	____	24
25. Responding to a person who is expressing affection for me in such a way that I do not ignore his feelings	____	____	____	25
26. Surveying a group to determine how much agreement exists (in making a group decision)	____	____	____	26
27. _____	____	____	____	27
28. _____	____	____	____	28

General		Need to do it LESS	Doing all right	Need to do it MORE	
29.	Talking in group discussions	____	____	____	29
30.	Getting feedback--encouraging others to let me know how my actions affect them	____	____	____	30
31.	Being aware when I am trying to cope with my own feelings of discomfort rather than responding to the other person	____	____	____	31
32.	Being able to tolerate silence when with others	____	____	____	32
33.	Being able to tolerate tension and conflict	____	____	____	33
34.	Accepting help from others	____	____	____	34
35.	Offering help to others	____	____	____	35
36.	Yielding to others--giving in to others	____	____	____	36
37.	Standing up for myself	____	____	____	37
38.	Being protective of others	____	____	____	38
39.	_____	____	____	____	39
40.	_____	____	____	____	40

RATING MY SCHOOL BOARD MEETING PRACTICES

I would rate our school board communication as:

☐ good ☐ could be improved

Thoughts, ideas and suggestions I have for improvement are:

_____

_____

_____

_____

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Time Management

EFFECTIVE SCHOOL BOARD MEETINGS

KEYS TO SCHOOL BOARDSMANSHIP

TIME MANAGEMENT

True-False Quiz

WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT TIME MANAGEMENT?

T/F

____ 1. Many nonproductive meetings could be avoided with good planning.
____ 2. Knowing how the board spends its time is essential for effective meetings.
____ 3. The board chairperson will resent a member who offers suggestions for making meetings more productive.
____ 4. The ineffective use of time creates stress, conflict, indecision and procrastination.
____ 5. When boards solve problems, they could save time if they would identify causes and gather information rather than jumping to discussions of decisions.
____ 6. The superintendent can help school board members save time by summarizing wordy and complex material.
____ 7. Board members should meet upon notice to solve crises, disturbances and personnel problems.

Here are some questions and answers about time management that can help you put "first things first" as you:

1. prepare for the follow up on school board meetings
2. fulfill and improve the results of your community and school system leadership roles
3. carry out your work and family responsibilities
4. help make your meetings more productive

WHO HAS TIME MANAGEMENT PROBLEMS?

Most of us are not satisfied with the way we use our time and are interested in learning ways we can create time by managing our time more efficiently.

WHAT IS THE NUMBER ONE TIME WASTER?

All surveys of public leaders and managers have reported that meetings are their number one time waster. Examples are: meetings that are too long, do not start on time, are not needed, are overloaded with aimless discussions and are frequently scheduled at poor times of the day.

HOW CAN A MEETING BE PRODUCTIVE?

Generally, when its objectives are accomplished in minimum time and the participants have a chance to prepare and freely discuss solutions, and feel that something worthwhile was accomplished.

WHAT ARE THE COSTS OF NONPRODUCTIVE MEETINGS?

Negative attitudes and low morale, as well as wasted time and the failure to accomplish the purpose of the meeting, are some of the costs.

WHAT CAUSES NON-PRODUCTIVE MEETINGS?

- Little preplanning
- Lack of teamwork
- Participants aren't prepared
- Indecision and procrastination
- Aimless and uninformed discussion

WHAT ARE SOME OF THE SOLUTIONS?

1. Effective chairpersons and board members resist "hidden agenda" ploys. The board defines goals and priorities, emphasizes points of agreement, sets deadlines, standards and controls.
2. The selection of the meeting time should be based upon the availability and preference of the participants.
3. Issues are clarified and summarized. The problem is well defined. The solutions are brainstormed and prioritized.
4. Clear agreements on decision making.
5. Keep discussions focused on the issue.

WHAT CAN A BOARD DO TO IMPROVE ITS TIME MANAGEMENT?

A school board can manage its time better and improve the results of its meetings by:

1. Listing and ranking tasks
2. Identifying the information it desires
3. Delegating information gathering tasks
4. Keeping track of how it spends its meeting time on policy, management, curriculum and community communication functions.
5. Clarify its own goals.

HOW CAN BOARD MEMBERS EVALUATE THEIR OWN TIME MANAGEMENT?

Good approaches include keeping a daily record of time spent and periodically examine it to find out where your time is going. Identify your time wasters and search for some time finders. Ask yourself if the time spent on conflict resolution could have been avoided or reduced before or during the problem solving process. Complete your evaluation by setting new goals, plans and time scheduling criteria. Avoid needless and poorly planned meetings.

HOW CAN I BEST SCHEDULE MY TIME?

Obtain a pocket calendar and carry it with you. Use it to schedule tasks, events and appointments. It can also serve as a diary and a place to record services performed and expenses. Begin by establishing three to five high priority tasks to be accomplished during the week and estimating and blocking out the time it will take to complete them. Work around or reschedule meetings and appointments already on your calendar. If time permits, work ahead and extend your plans into the following week or weeks. Most people don't do enough planning. Set time aside each day and week to review and plan your calendar and action plans.

HOW CAN I KEEP MY BOARD, JOB AND FAMILY TIME DEMANDS FROM CONFLICTING?

"First things first" is a good rule of thumb, but is difficult to practice. Do the work that needs doing. Work intelligently – not harder. Get off the treadmill and relax, recreate and spend time with your family and friends. Your children need you when they are growing up. Involve your family in the setting of priorities as they recognize yours and share and set their own. When you have a time schedule, say "no" to other demands upon it.

WHEN DO I FIND TIME FOR STUDY AND READING?

To be effective you must invest time in study and reading. Make a "must read" list and a "want to read" list. Block out time for the items on your "must read" list. Learn to skim and scan for main ideas, underscore the important details. Use *waiting time* to your advantage.

SUMMARY

Carl Sandburg said it: " Time is the coin of your life. It is the only coin you have, and only you can determine how it will be spent. Be careful lest you let others spend it for you."

IDEA PAPER 1: WHAT IS YOUR TIME WORTH?*

If You Earn	Every Hour is Worth	Every Minute is Worth	In a Year, One Hour a Day is Worth
$ 5,000	$ 3.38	0.0563	$ 625
7,500	5.07	0.0845	938
10,000	6.76	0.1126	1,250
12,000	8.11	0.1352	1,500
15,000	10.14	0.1690	1,875
20,000	13.51	0.2252	2,500
25,000	16.89	0.2815	3,125
35,000	23.65	0.3942	4,375
40,000	27.03	0.4505	5,000
50,000	33.78	0.5630	6,250

* Based on 185 eight-hour working days a year.

IDEA PAPER 2: THE 80/20 RULE

These examples, drawn from everyday life, should enable you to feel more comfortable about concentration on high-value tasks, even at the cost of ignoring many lower-value tasks:

80 percent of sales comes from 20 percent of customers.

80 percent of production is in 20 percent of the product line.

80 percent of sick leave is taken by 20 percent of employees.

80 percent of file usage is in 20 percent of files.

80 percent of dinners repeat 20 percent of recipes.

80 percent of dirt is on 20 percent of floor areas that are highly used.

80 percent of food money is spent on 20 percent of the expensive meat and grocery items.

80 percent of the washing is done on the 20 percent of the wardrobe that is well-used items.

80 percent of television time is spent on 20 percent of programs most popular with the family.

80 percent of reading time is spent on 20 percent of the pages in the newspaper (front page, sports page, editorials, columnists, feature page).

80 percent of telephone calls come from 20 percent of all callers.

80 percent of eating out is done at 20 percent of favorite restaurants.

IT IS IMPORTANT TO REMIND YOURSELF AGAIN AND AGAIN NOT TO BE BOGGED DOWN ON LOW-VALUE ACTIVITIES BUT TO FOCUS ON THE 20% WHERE THE HIGH VALUE IS.

Taken from How to Get Control of Your Time and Your Life, by Alan Lakein. Peter H. Wyden, Inc., Publisher, New York, New York.

How Does Your Board Spend Its Time and Resources?

INTRODUCTION

As a school board member, you know that school boards cannot control factors such as home environment and TV that have great impact on student achievement. However, you became a school board member because you thought that if school boards set the right priorities and make wise decisions, they can make a difference.

This exercise will help you determine if you and your board are using your board meeting time and resources according to your wishes.

Please read and follow the directions on the reverse side of this page.

Modeled after values-clarification strategies developed by Sidney B. Simon, Howard Kercenbaum.

INSTRUCTIONS

1. List up to ten resources in your school district which affect student learning.
2. Now, using a scale of 1 (low) to 10 (high), assign a number to each item according to how you feel it has greatest impact on learning.
3. Next, put a $ sign beside the three items for which your board spends most of its funds.
4. Now, put a T beside the three items that regularly take up the most time at your school board meetings.
5. Put a P beside the items about which parents and students most often talk to you.
6. Put an S beside the items teachers and other staff members most often bring to your attention.
7. Next, put a figure 5 beside any item of which you think your board may not have control in five years.
8. Finally, go down your list and place beside each item the approximate date when your board discussed this item.

1. 10 RESOURCES THAT AFFECT STUDENT LEARNING	2. 1-10	3. $	4. T	5. P	6. S	7. 5	8. Date

Share your answers with other board members to see what you have learned from this exercise. An interesting way to do this is to complete these open-ended sentences:

A. I learned that I _____

that the board _____

B. I was surprised to see that I _____

that the board _____

C. I was pleased to see that I _____

D. I realized that the board _____

To close the exercise, discuss what implications these insights have for future meetings of your board.

LIFE CHANGE INDICATORS FOR CONTROLLING STRESS

Instructions: Complete this exercise by putting a check mark by each of the crises that you have personally experienced in the last two years. If you experienced two or more of any crisis, make that number of marks. After you have completed the exercise, multiply the number of check marks by the corresponding number in parenthesis, and then total all the points at the end.

1.	Death of a spouse	(100)_____	1.
2.	Divorce	(73)_____	2.
3.	Marital separation	(65)_____	3.
4.	Jail term	(63)_____	4.
5.	Death of a close family member	(63)_____	5.
6.	Personal injury or illness	(53)_____	6.
7.	Marriage	(50)_____	7.
8.	Job firing	(47)_____	8.
9.	Marital reconciliation	(45)_____	9.
10.	Retirement	(45)_____	10.
11.	Change in health of family member	(44)_____	11.
12.	Pregnancy	(40)_____	12.
13.	Sexual difficulties	(39)_____	13.
14.	Gain of a new family member	(39)_____	14.
15.	Business readjustment	(39)_____	15.
16.	Change in financial state	(38)_____	16.
17.	Death of a close friend	(37)_____	17.
18.	Change to different line of work	(36)_____	18.
19.	Change in number of arguments with spouse	(35)_____	19.
20.	Mortgage of more than $10,000	(31)_____	20.
21.	Foreclosure of mortgage or loan	(30)_____	21.
22.	Change in responsibilities at work	(29)_____	22.
23.	Departure of son/daughter from home	(29)_____	23.
24.	Trouble with in-laws	(29)_____	24.
25.	Outstanding personal achievement	(28)_____	25.
26.	Spouse's beginning or stopping work	(26)_____	26.
27.	Beginning or end of school	(26)_____	27.
28.	Change in living conditions	(25)_____	28.
29.	Change of personal habits	(24)_____	29.
30.	Trouble with boss	(22)_____	30.
31.	Change in work hours or conditions	(20)_____	31.
32.	Change in residence	(20)_____	32.
33.	Change in schools	(19)_____	33.
34.	Change in recreation	(19)_____	34.
35.	Change in church activities	(18)_____	35.
36.	Change in social activities	(17)_____	36.
37.	Mortgage or loan less than $10,000	(16)_____	37.
38.	Change in sleeping habits	(16)_____	38.
39.	Change in number of family gatherings	(15)_____	39.
40.	Change in eating habits	(15)_____	40.
41.	Vacation	(13)_____	41.
42.	Christmas	(12)_____	42.
43.	Minor violations of the law	(11)_____	43.

TOTAL _____

(see reverse side for explanation)

What Total Score Means: If you score below 150 points, you are standing on fairly safe ground--chances are about one in three that a serious health change may occur in the next years. If you score between 150 and 300 points, you may feel earth tremors and notice "geographical personal faults" as your chances rise to about 20 percent for a change in health. If you scored over 300 points, a personal earthquake is near. Be sure your health insurance is paid; your chances for a physical illness to occur within the next year are almost 90 percent!

Adapted from research by Thomas H. Holmes, M.D., et al., University of Washington.

RATING MY SCHOOL BOARD MEETING PRACTICES

I would rate time management practices for myself as:

☐ good ☐ could be improved

I would rate time management practices for our school board as:

_____ _____

_____ good _____ could be improved

Thoughts, ideas and suggestions I have for improvement are:

For myself:_____

_____

_____

_____

For our board:_____

_____

_____

_____

Legal Requirements

EFFECTIVE SCHOOL BOARD MEETINGS

KEYS TO SCHOOL BOARDSMANSHIP

----------EXAMPLE ONLY----------

LEGAL ASPECTS OF SCHOOL BOARD MEETINGS*

I. When Held

A. Regular meeting at least monthly. RCW 28A.57.324.

B. Time of regular meeting must be set by resolution of board or by bylaws of board. RCW 28A.57.324.

C. Should be set annually to avoid problem of proof in litigation.

D. If regular meeting falls on a holiday, the meeting should be held on next business day. RCW 42.30.070. This should be made a part of your resolution or bylaw setting time of regular meeting.

E. Special meetings may be called by President (1st class district) or chairman (2nd class district) or a majority of board members. RCW 28A.57.324.

II. Where Held

A. Second class districts** may hold regular or special meetings anywhere, even outside district. RCW 42.30.070.

B. First class districts must maintain an office at which all regular meetings must be held. RCW 28A.59.100. Special meetings may be held anywhere.

III. Conduct of Meetings

A. Board has power to adopt bylaws for its government.

1. May contain time and place for regular meetings, place of special meetings unless otherwise indicated in notice of meeting, and provision for holding meetings on next regular business day if regular meeting falls on a holiday.

2. Agenda.

3. When public will be heard and rules limiting time.

4. Caution: Do not adopt all of the statutes relating to boards as part of your bylaws. When statutes change you may forget to amend bylaws and create conflict. Statutes are applicable in any event.

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*Prepared by Elvin J. Vandeberg. Kane, Vandeberg, Hartinger & Walker, Attorneys at Law, Tacoma, Washington.

**Under 2,000 students.

5. Caution: Be careful of rules that prohibit board action except after first and second readings at successive meetings. If adopted, provide for suspension by vote of board and automatic suspension unless objection raised by member prior to vote.

B. Quorum is majority of all members of the board. RCW 28A.57.325. Majority of those present is sufficient to approve action except employment of superintendent in first class district, which requires a vote of majority of the board (RCW 28A.59.040) and election of director in any district to fill a vacancy. (RCW 28A.57.326).

IV. Minutes of Meetings

A. Minutes of meetings are required by law, including executive sessions. RCW 42.32.030 and RCW 28A.58.150.

B. Minutes are open to public inspection, except for executive sessions. RCW 42.32.030.

C. Care should be taken in preparation, because in court proceedings, the minutes are the proof of what actually occurred. Board is generally bound by the minutes of its meetings.

D. If litigation is anticipated, attorney should review minutes before board approval.

E. If dealing with complicated subject, have attorney prepare written resolution to insure that action taken is that required under circumstances.

V. Open Public Meetings Act. Chapter 42.30 RCW

A. Act requires two basic things:

1. All school board meetings must be open to the public unless the meeting, or the portion to which the public is excluded, comes within the exemptions of the statute.

2. If school board meeting is a special meeting, notice of the meeting must be given to those identified in statute unless notice is waived in statutory manner.

3. Violation of 1 and 2 above renders any action taken at the meeting void. Furthermore, it subjects board members who participate to possible fines and other court processes.

4. What is a school board meeting? See Cathcart v. Anderson, 85 Wn.2d 102, where court said:

> We believe the purpose of the Act is to allow the public to view the decision-making process at all stages.

B. Exclusions from Act. RCW 42.30.140.

1. Note: Exclusion from the Act means that no notice of that portion of meeting is required and public may be excluded. Hence, if only item covered at special meeting is excluded by the Act, no notice at all is required.

2. Portion of meeting of board where it is acting as a quasi-judicial body, in a quasi-judicial matter between named parties. Examples are:

   a. Hearing on discharge, nonrenewal or discipline of employee, unless employee requests public meeting.

   b. Hearing re discipline or expulsion of student, unless student requests public meeting.

3. Portion of meeting during which planning or adopting strategy or positions to be taken in collective bargaining, grievance or mediation proceedings, or reviewing such proposals made by other side.

4. Others, but not generally applicable to school boards.

C. Executive sessions authorized.

1. Caution: If special meeting, notice must be given although public is excluded from that portion of meeting designated as executive session.

2. Items that can be considered in executive session are:

   a. Matters affecting national security.

   b. Selection of site, acquisition of real estate by lease or purchase, when publicity regarding would cause likelihood of increased price.

   c. Disposition of real property by sale or lease, when publicity regarding would cause likelihood of decreased price. Discussion limited to minimum selling or leasing price.

   d. Appointment, employment, or dismissal of employee.

   e. Hear complaints or charges against an employee, unless employee requests public hearing.

   f. Caution: Statute says board may "consider" above items in executive session. Does term "consider" include right to take action?

D. Distinction between regular and special meetings.

1. Regular meetings are those held at regular time set by board resolution or bylaws.

2. All other meetings are special meetings.

3. Regular meetings require no notice and any matter may be considered and action taken thereon.

4. Special meetings require a notice to be given and consideration and action limited to those items stated in notice.

E. Special meetings--notice required.

1. Notice of special meetings must be given to:

a. Members of the board, and

b. Newspapers, radio stations, television stations which have on file with the district a written request for notice. AGO 1971, No. 33.

2. Notice must be delivered personally or by mail at least 24 hours before time specified for the meeting.

3. Board members may waive notice by

a. Filing written waiver at or prior to meeting with clerk or secretary.

b. By being actually present when meeting convenes.

4. There is no statutory provision for waiver by press, radio or television.

5. Notice Exception: Special meeting without notice may be called to consider and act in cases "involving injury or damage to persons or property or the likelihood of such injury or damage, when time requirements of such notice would make notice impractical and increase likelihood of such injury or damage." But see: Mead School District v. Mead Education Association, 85 Wn.2d 140, wherein court held teachers' strike was not an emergency under particular facts.

F. Special meetings--contents of notice.

1. Notice must contain

a. Time and place of meeting

b. Business to be conducted. ONLY BUSINESS COVERED BY NOTICE MAY BE CONDUCTED.

2. Examples of notice:

   a. "Adopt Resolution 76-21" is inadequate
   "Adopt a policy for reduction of staff."

   b. "Personnel" questionable. "Consider and, if necessary, take action regarding charges against employee."
   "Consider and, if necessary, take action regarding employment of personnel."

G. Adjournments and continuances.

1. Board may adjourn a regular or special meeting to a specific future time.

2. May also adjourn a meeting which is an adjourned meeting to a specific future time.

3. Caution: Notice of adjournment or continuation must be posted at or near door of meeting room.

4. No notice required to members, press, radio or television if posting required under 3 above accomplished, unless adjournment is set by secretary or clerk based on failure of any board member to attend.

H. Disturbances.

1. If group or groups "interrupt" meeting so that orderly conduct not feasible, members of board

   a. May order room cleared except for members of news media who are not involved in disturbance, or

   b. May adjourn and reconvene at place selected by majority vote, but members of news media who are not involved in disturbance must be admitted, or

   c. May order room cleared of only those involved in interruption.

2. In any session from which the public is excluded under the statute, final action can be taken only on those items appearing on agenda.

RATING MY SCHOOL BOARD MEETING PRACTICES

I would rate our compliance with legal requirements for meetings as:

☐ good ☐ could be improved ☐ don't know

Thoughts, ideas and suggestions I have for improvement are:

_____

_____

_____

_____

RATING MY SCHOOL BOARD MEETING PRACTICES

Summary Form

A summary of the ideas and suggestions that may improve our school board meeting practices:

RE: THE AGENDA My Rating:_____

RE: BOARD AND ADMINISTRATOR STAFF ROLES My Rating:_____

RE: LEADERSHIP My Rating:_____

RE: DECISION MAKING My Rating:_____

RE: COMMUNICATIONS My Rating_____

RE: TIME MANAGEMENT My Rating_____

RE: LEGAL REQUIREMENTS My Rating_____

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EFFECTIVE SCHOOL BOARD MEETINGS WORKSHOP

Evaluation Form

Your reactions to this workshop will aid your association in improving future workshops on this topic. No names please. Thank you!

1. My overall reaction to this workshop:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Very Low			So-So			Very High

Comments:

_____

_____

2. What was the most helpful idea you gained from this workshop?

_____

_____

3. In this workshop I'd like more of:

_____

_____

3. In this workshop I'd suggest less:

_____

_____

5. Please rate the leader of the workshop.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Very Low			So-So			Very High

5. General comments, ideas or suggestions.

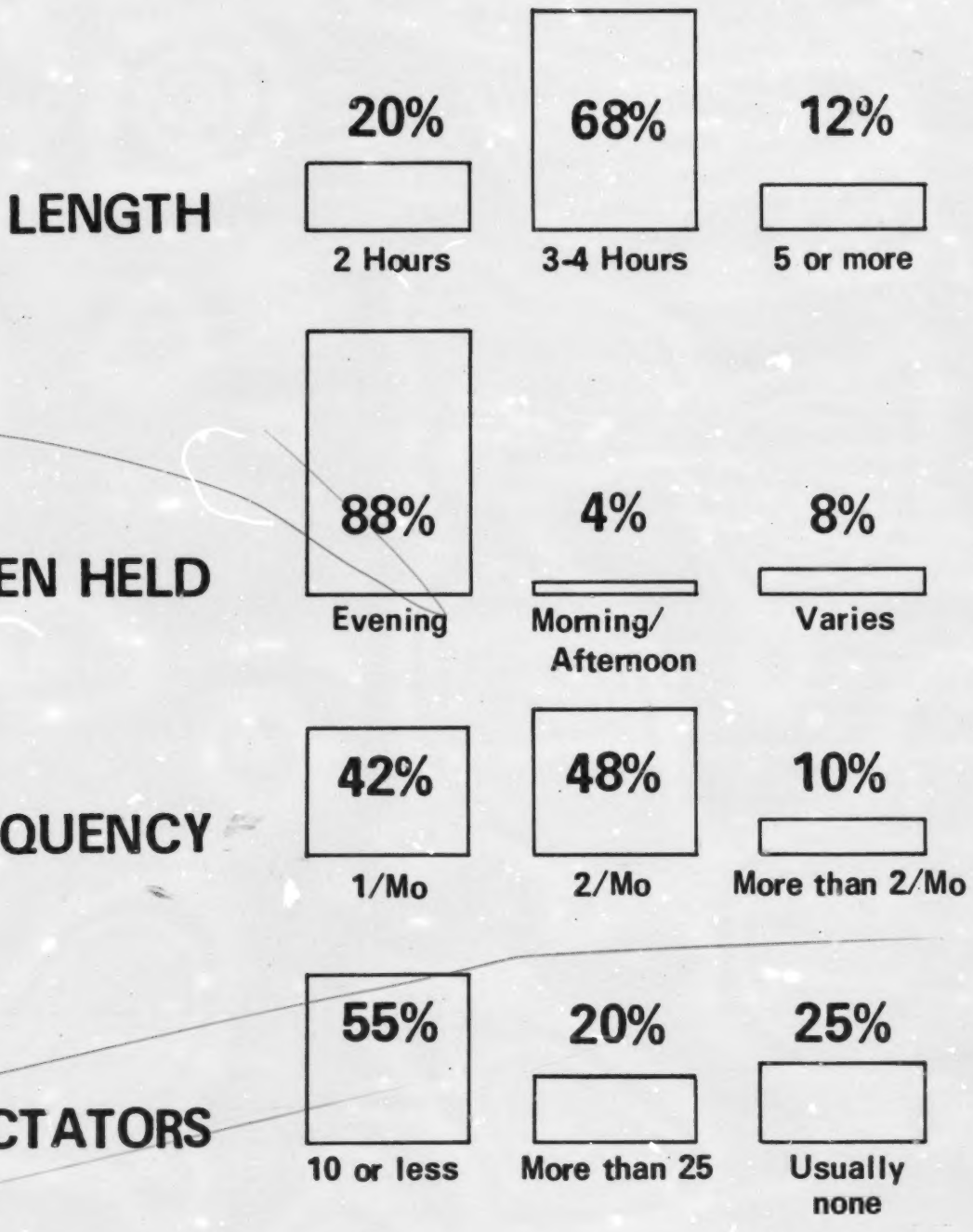
_____

_____

_____

RELATED TRANSPARENCIES

SCHOOL BOARD MEETINGS (National Sample)



EM 1

SUMMARY: (National)

School Board Meetings Are Typically

- held once or twice per month
- last 3 – 4 hours
- usually at the same location
- during the evening hours
- attract 10 or fewer persons

EFFECTIVE MEETING ELEMENTS

1. Agenda
2. Roles
3. Leadership
4. Decision Making
5. Communication
6. Time Management
7. Legal Requirements

A CONSENT AGENDA—

- Combines Routine Items
- Saves Time For Important Issues
- Saves Recording Time
- Is Very Flexible
- Is Covered By One Agenda Item

GOOD MINUTES INCLUDE:

- Name of School, City or Town
- Place of Meeting—Date and Hours
- Kind of Meeting
- Members Present or Absent
- Presiding Officer
- Business Transacted
- Adjournment

EM 5

	Superintendent Smith	Tom Thomas	Bob Bright	Marge Matson	Jan Brown	Jim Beam
Present	x	x	o	x	x	x
Motion		x				
Second					x	
Yes		x		x	x	x
No						
Abstain						
Absent			x			
Motion				x		
Second						x
Yes		x		x	x	x
No						
Abstain						
Absent			x			

MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION
XYZ SCHOOL DISTRICT

_____
(Date, Place, Time)

Agenda Item	Action
Attendance at this regular meeting: 1. Pledge of Allegiance 2. Approval of Minutes	Approval
"These minutes of the Board of Education of the XYZ School District were approved on _____ by (signed) _____" (date) (Clerk of Board)	
3. Adoption of Consent Agenda	Adoption of Consent Agenda and Approval

BEHAVIORS THAT HELP ACHIEVE TASKS

- Initiator
- Information Seeker
- Information Giver
- Clarifier
- Summarizer
- Consensus Taker

BEHAVIORS THAT HELP MEMBERS WORK TOGETHER

- Encourager
- Sensor
- Harmonizer
- Compromiser
- Gate-Keeper
- Standard Setter

BEHAVIORS THAT DESTROY EFFECTIVENESS

- Attacker
- Dependent Person
- Bully
- Blocker
- Playboy/girl
- Recognition Seeker
- Procrastinator

EM 9

QUIZ ANSWERS

4	A
3	B
1	C
8	D
5	E
6	F
2	G
7	H

THE PROCESS

1. State the Decision
2. Gather Information
3. List Alternatives
4. List Possible Outcomes
5. Consider Probability of Outcomes
6. Consider Desirability of Outcomes
7. List Risks of Outcomes
8. Rank Alternatives

EM 10

ANSWERS TO PARLIAMENTARY QUIZ

1. False
2. False
3. True
4. False
5. False
6. False
7. False
8. True
9. False
10. True

EM 11